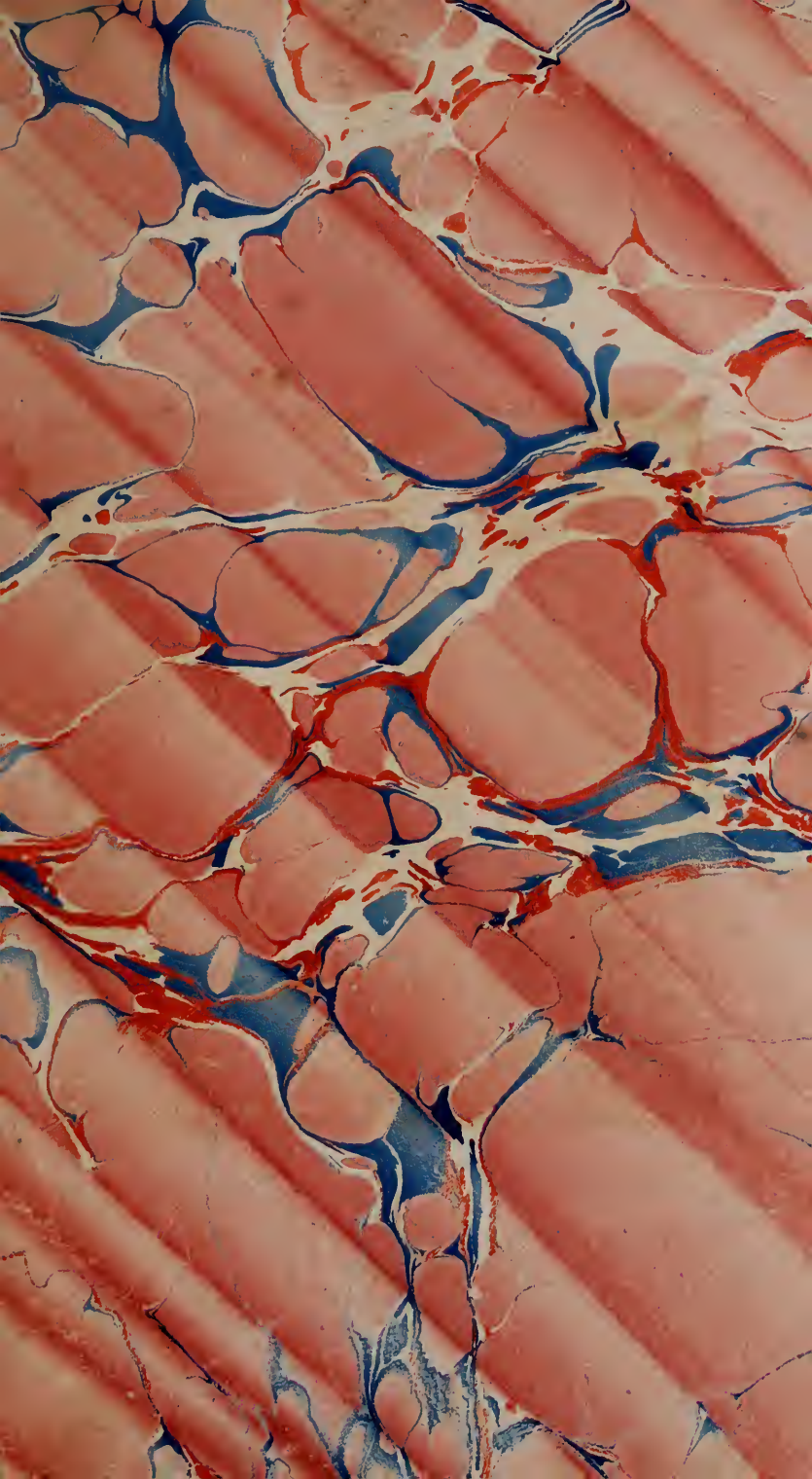




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THE
HUT AND THE CASTLE;

A ROMANCE.

[Cuthbertson]

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES;"

"SANTO SEBASTIANO; OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR," &c.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

IN THE

YEAR

LONDON: 1649.

PRINTED BY J. MOYES, GREVILLE-STREET.

THE
HUT AND THE CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

As a train of waggons were conveying the baggage of a regiment of infantry through the intricacies of the town of F., a serjeant belonging to the corps sallied from a public-house, and, by a loud halloo, caused a small cart, attached to the line, instantly to halt.

The driver of the cart appeared of a prodigious height: a pyramid on its head, over which a flaunting shawl was spread as a protection from the large drops of a sudden shower, seemed to add at least two feet to a figure which, had it not been for the appendage of a worked flounced petticoat, peeping in dragged distress from beneath a military great-

coat, might have readily been mistaken for that of an invalid grenadier.

“Where, in the d — l’s name, are you marching?” vociferated the serjeant, in no gentle tones. “Can you not see that I am here, you stupid owl!”

“Stupid owl!!” exclaimed the tall figure, in tones more analogous to the night-yell of the bird so ungallantly mentioned, than the dulcet accents of a fair daughter of creation. “How was I to diwine that you vas here? I seed no bear for a sign: no, nor no Baccus, to betoken *un ivrogne* vas within. Stupid owl, *en werité!!* [*vérité*] Stupid owl!! *Sacre bleu!!* Vas it to be called approprious [opprobrious] names, I arose before day to *enjamber* that there cold beach in the thick of the fog and of *les troupes*, up to my ankles in water, and at the *péril* of tearing my beautiful Wandyke flounce, to get *vos effets* out of the fangs of the rewenue sharks for you, *gros vilain matin!* and packed all unbeknown to them in the *charrette*, with my own hands, which never yet fed *me* with the bitter bread

of idleness? Stupid owl!! *Fi au diable!!* Was it to be called owl, I forsook my comfortable state of viderwood, and my neat varm public-house, as was all the woge [vogue], and, caught by the tinsel of *un gros Benêt*, followed the fortin of *un soldat!* Stupid owl indeed!! *Sacre matin!* Stupid owl! *Parbleu!* Stupid owl! *Polisson va!!*" and at each reiteration of the offending epithet, her indignation led her key to a shriller pitch in *alto*, until her elevation soared even to the gamut of the ingenious* Father Kircher himself; for her tones, like his owl-notes, "afforded tremendous melody."

"Stupid owl! *Miséricorde!*" — she continued: "Was it to be called owl, I tramped all over the Continent with you, *grande bête que vous êtes!* and toiled and moiled, as a *vivandière*, in camp and in barrack, on march and in siege, till I made a man of *un bourdon*; and headicated [educated] your son of air into the most naturalest

* Father Kircher set the voices of birds to music.

genuine of the hage. *O mon Dieu!* was it to be called owl, I held your numskull, when it was splitting with intemperance; or, *souffredouleur* that I am! whilst you laid snoring off your *ivrognerie*, cleaned your arms and accoutrements with my own hands, to save your bacon from scarification? Was it to be called stupid owl, that I watched by your wounded carcass by day and by night, for eleven long weeks; *mon logement* the cold earth, and my covering the canopy of heaven? And now, *eh! ma foi!* when I have brought you safe, and well, and rich, back to your own *contrée*, my welcome is, stupid owl, *en verité!* — *Fi au diable!!*”

Serjeant Lancefield, whose powerfully renovated gratitude had now completely trained him for a penitentiary, playfully patting her burning cheek, jocosely exclaimed:

“Come, come, Deb, my neat article! ground the arms of your resentment. Do not thus take to heart my calling you out of your name, once in a way; and for the honour of the profession, do not suffer a Waterloo

hero to return to his home in disgrace. Come, come, forgive and forget, *ma jolie Deb!*—I was cross, for I was heart-chilled by unexpected tidings.”

The moment the repentant husband commenced the tattoo upon her cheek, for mutual goodwill to return to their quarters, and accompanied that conciliating measure by sidelong glances of admiration, the wrath of his indignant spouse seemed also to commence a gradual decline; for as each pat was repeated, the shawl was seen to recede, and to give more and more of her clime-bronzed cheek to view; but when “*ma jolie Deb!*” struck its magical sound upon her delighted ears, by a sudden twitch at her shawl she completely unveiled; and then, with a judicious shake of the head, to restore the graceful motion of her ostrich plume, which she feared had been impeded by temporary suspension, she set about the arrangement of her shawl around her, in the most striking style of French mode; and as the shower had terminated, and several pedestrians had been

arrested in their progress by her animated tones, she threw open her cloth coat, to display the smart drapery it had concealed; thus adroitly to yield proof to every beholder, that she had not sojourned in the land of dress without advantage.

“ But, I say, Curnailus [Cornelius],” she now exclaimed, in a tone of comparative mellifluence, “ what noos did you hear to make you *rébarbatif*? What! the *vin* all sour in *Angleterre*: or fresh taxed on your return, in foreknowledge of consequent scarcity?”

“ The grape, at least, will be sour enough to many a brave man, Deb. I have had the sorrow to learn, that part of our battalion is to be disbanded,” said the serjeant, in a tone betraying strong feeling.

“ *Eh bien!* sure we knew that,” returned Deb carelessly, whilst sending her fingers in anxious search through her nodding plume, to ascertain that every feather was in its proper place.

“ *Dame, oui,* but not that we should be turned to the right about by the economists of

the land, in the very dead of winter, when neither industry nor ——; but hist! for here comes one, upon whom I fear this d —— d reduction will bear hard. A hero, distinguished even amongst British officers, to be low on the list of our lieutenants; and he on the wrong side of thirty, seems to argufy, that fortune has not dealt so kindly by him, as by you and me, Deb.”

“ *Hélas*,” cried Deb, placing her feet in the first position, in process for the performance of a graceful curtsey, which she had learned to execute in France; “ *Hélas*, and *le soleil* never beamed upon a more kinder, beautifuller, affabler, *gentilhomme*, than *Monsieur* Cameron, excepting, indeed, Lieutenant Fauconberg; but *ah pardi!* is not he still lower on that *diabolique* list, than even *pauvre* Cameron?” and now, unmindful of the first position, or any position, but that impelled by anxiety, she lost all recollection of the graces of Terpsichore, and striding up to her husband’s side, eagerly demanded, “ If there were a

chance of her prime favourite Fauconberg being disbanded?"

At this moment, Cameron, attended by a soldier, who was leading a brace of dogs linked together for their march, approached; and courteously inquired — "If Serjeant Lancefield could direct him to a butcher's shop?"

"In that up and down *rue toute de travers* yonder, I saw two, your honour," replied the serjeant respectfully.

"I ken thae twa," said the leader of the dogs, in accents that proclaimed him a Caledonian: "but will it na be better, your honour, gin ye buy your dogs' meat in the shambles? In sic a bra' town as this, there is a merket-place, nae doubt; and noo that we are about to be disbonded, is na the time to fling awa' the siller."

"True," responded Cameron, in accents of sweet and melancholy mildness: "do as you think best, Sandy; but remember, my poor dogs are strangers in this country, and do not

let *them* find reason to complain of their reception."

The expression of Cameron's fine countenance portrayed internal agitation; but fearing that agitation might betray itself to the wary eye of observation, he hastily turned into an adjacent street, to explore his way to the F. Arms, where he had left the companions of his march.

"A d — l of a business this reduction, Sandy!" said Serjeant Lancefield, as soon as Cameron was out of sight; "but you, of course, will continue with his honour?"

"Na, not I, mon, by gar!" returned Sandy, "I feel owr meikle regard for the douce lad, to stay, just to be incumbrance to him. But de'il hae my saul, if fortune was gude to him, gin I wad part frae him: but the de'il only kens what trouble the puir cheild may be involved in: verra like into the awsome durance o' a prison, just for the lack o' the siller; and *by gar*, I'se no be the man to help

on the calamity. Na, na, I'se never stay to see that woful day."

"Prison! *Balourd!*" exclaimed Deb — "why, sure, he can go to his friends. The Scotch, to their honour, always stick by one another, like the meal and water in their stir-about."

"The de'il tak' the friend the puir fallow has got, that I e'er kenned or heard o'," said Sandy; "for he wad as soon claver of auld Scratch as of Scotland; and just talk of hame, or kith or kin, before him, and ye wad draw the gloom of midnight about his broo; and the de'il hae my saul, but mony's the time and aft I hae trembled for his croon, when the letters hae arrived for the regiment; for never wad he just stap to ken gin were there ane for him, but aff to his quarters he wad scud, and there groan as gin his heart war about to burst; and mony a big tear I hae kenned him endeavouring to conceal."

"*Sur ma part de paradis,*" exclaimed Deb, shrugging her shoulders, and with a

countenance of strong commiseration, “ his vicket parents crossed him in love, and so the dear young *gentilhomme* has outlawed them, and his own *contrée*.”

“ For a wee space of time I thought that might be the fash o’ it mysel’; for there dangles aboon his neck the picture of a bra lassie, which mony time he gave me strict charges, gin he fell in battle, to see that the picture was placed in the grave wi’ him; which, puir cheild, wad hae been verra extravagant, there being sic a bonny broad piece of pure gold at the back of it.”

“ I’ll bet a *Napoleon*, that there is his lovyer’s picture,” said Deb.

“ Ah, weel,” answered Sandy, at that moment catching a glimpse of his master, emerging from a cross-way — “ I just had better no be divulging his honour’s secrets: but this meikle I can swear till, the picture is na that of his Joe.”

“ *Allez-vous en*, and be hanged!” cried Deb, pettishly, “ since you will not go with

him into Scotland, and vorm out all this mystery."

"Hoot, woman! hae I not heard him say to Lieutenant Fokenbarg, and he is na the man for uttering sic strang random clavers; 'he wad as soon gang to auld Scrat as to Scotland;' so the de'il flee awa' wi my saul, gin I kna what to mak' o' the puir lad; though mony's the time I hae heard Ensign Merchmont ca' him to his face, 'a mice-in-trap!' [misanthrope.] But, by my troth, woman, I ne'er gave meikle to that wild cheild's din."

"Mice-in-trap! Mouse-in-trap!!" reiterated Deb, her countenance beaming sapience—" *Ma foi!* The very thing! Guessed *comme un ange*. Ay, let us vomen alone for vorming out secrets, and unwinding riddles. Mice-in-trap means, Sandy, that he is caught — his poor heart knabbed, like a mouse in a trap. Ay, ay, ve vomen are the minxes [sphinxes] as our Julius [Julius] talks on; and by minx *me* is your

riddle spounded [expounded] for you, simple Sandy."

The beefsteak which Serjeant Lancefield had ordered for himself and his industrious spouse, was at this moment announced in readiness, and terminated all further conference with Sandy upon the mysteries apparent in the situation of Lieutenant Cameron.

CHAPTER II.

THE admiration so unequivocally expressed by Deborah Lancefield for Lieutenant Cameron, was by no means likely to call her taste in question, since it was scarcely possible to find a man more attractive in person, grace, and intelligence; and though his countenance wore invariably an expression of the deepest melancholy, its sweetness was not destroyed by that tone of touching sadness; and the sympathy it failed not to inspire, awakened uncommon interest for him in every feeling mind. His manners, too, were formed for admiration; since they bore the high polish of superior life: but although mild and elegant, they were strikingly reserved.

His name, with his evident partiality to every Caledonian, led to the conviction of his being a Scot himself; but of his country and

connexions he never spoke. At the age of twenty-four he had joined, as an ensign, by purchase, the regiment to which he still belonged. He brought with him no introductory letters; but all his brother officers soon felt convinced, that he was a finished gentleman, though that could be inferred only from his conduct and manners; for the reserved *hauteur* of his deportment, which never slumbered when called forth by necessity, forbade every attempt to penetrate into his history by questions to himself; while to any other information respecting him there was no clew whatever: and though all perceived he was far from affluent, they also saw, he was honourable, benevolent, and generous; and accordingly pronounced the mystery which enveloped him to be the mystery, not of disgrace, but of misfortune.

In the regiment with Cameron, there was one individual, whom, under happier circumstances, he would have taken to his heart as a confidential friend—and that was Fauconberg; but excess of sensibility had weakened the

energy of Cameron's affections; and with feelings harrowed almost into the apathy of a misanthrope, he revolted from friendship: but Fauconberg had claims of no common nature upon the gratitude of this mysterious man—claims the heart of Cameron could not withstand.

At the period when our troops returned from their pacific station in that country they had conquered, Fauconberg was in his twenty-fifth year; and having no private fortune, nor connexions to exert any interest for his promotion, it could be no subject for wonder or reproach, valiant as he had proved himself, to find his name low on the list of lieutenants.

The family of Fauconberg held its rank amongst the first class of private gentlemen in Ireland. His father had been long a benefited clergyman, who, although in the receipt of an excellent income, had found his benevolence and hospitality at constant warfare with his wish for accumulating a provident fund, for those of his family who might

survive him. His store was therefore small, when he found himself called into increased expenditure, by his high renown for learning and exemplary piety obtaining a mitre for him; but scarcely had the solemn ceremony of instalment placed him on the bench, when another unexpected translation removed him from this transitory state, leaving little or no property behind him.

Bishop Fauconberg left a widow and four children to deplore their irreparable loss; but three only of his progeny had their affliction for the loss of their parent augmented by pecuniary difficulties; for his elder son, Gustavus, had, long ere the elevation of his father, been adopted by the bishop's elder and only brother, the squire of Fauconberg Castle, who not only made him his heir, but had him duly authorized to take the name of Rosstrevor, which he himself had assumed from his mother; and taking the education of his adopted son wholly upon himself, at an early period of the life of Gustavus, withdrew him from the invaluable advantages of parental care.

Very shortly after the universally lamented death of Bishop Fauconberg, government granted a small pension to his widow, as a provision for herself and the three children left destitute by their father's early decease, (our lieutenant, Albert, then a youth of sixteen, and two girls, not entered on their teens); and vainly did the heart-stricken widow look for assistance, or even for sympathy, from the rich old bachelor of the castle; for he "abhorred her, and the brats she had spoiled in rearing," as he often boasted to his boon companions; for, in the exuberance of a high flow of animal spirits, Mrs. Fauconberg, in her juvenile days, had laughed at Mr. Rosstrevor's old bachelor propensities, and, by so doing, awakened in his bosom towards her a never-ceasing enmity, which cruelly evinced itself in the most afflicting moment of her life; since he allowed her to remove from an episcopal palace of much splendour, to a small cottage in the vicinity of the spot where the remains of her heart's treasure were deposited, without addressing even one consolatory line to her, or permitting

his pampered heir to pay a visit of condolence to his sole surviving parent.

When the executors of Bishop Fauconberg had finally arranged the important trust confided to them, Albert Fauconberg learned, with dismay, that not one shilling remained in their hands. The pension granted by government to his disconsolate mother, he considered as barely sufficient for her maintenance, and for completing the education of his sisters. Prompt, therefore, was the determination of his affectionate heart, not to diminish his mother's comforts, by trespassing upon her now limited income; neither would resentment for the unfeeling conduct of his uncle permit his condescending to make application to him for aid in any form.

Bishop Fauconberg had determined that his younger son should adopt his own profession; Albert, therefore, had commenced his academic studies to prepare him for the sacred function: but now, alas! there was no longer a fund for the completion of this plan; for, independently of the suggestion of his generosity and affec-

tion, he recoiled from the idea of partaking of a source, that he conceived could only with propriety be used by the helpless, or by those whose services had conscientiously earned it, not by an active youth like himself; and, in consequence of these feelings and opinions, he resolved to turn his thoughts to arms; without loss of time to repair to our army in the Peninsula, and join it as a volunteer; since, of a commission he felt assured he had no chance, as he found the friends of a living, and of a dead bishop, were not equally active: Those who would have exerted themselves with energy to serve Albert whilst his father sat on the bench, now heard of his hopeless situation only with exclamations of pretended commiseration, which inflicted no trouble in their utterance; but the mitre no longer pointed out the elevation of him whom they had felt pride in calling friend; and friendship had become cold with the heart of the man, whose transcendent talents had even reflected a portion of their own lustre upon his reputed friends.

The march of Albert Fauconberg from the maternal roof, to join our triumphant army, was a stolen one; and the first intimation his afflicted mother received of this new source of sorrow, was, in the affectionate and affecting letter he left for her the morning he commenced his route. But the solitude of that route was soon broken, since the attachment of powerful gratitude procured a faithful squire for our young adventurer, whose departure was no sooner revealed to the lamenting domestics of his deserted home, than the afflicting news spread like a desolating torrent far and wide, sweeping the cheerful smile from every peasant's lip; and, with clamorous grief, all deplored the hard fate of their late beloved pastor's darling child.

But the sorrow of one individual expanded into action. The son of the parish clerk of Bishop Fauconberg's long-held benefice at once determined to forsake home, country, and even a budding beauty, who was just beginning to steal his truant thoughts from the psalmody his father was toiling hard to teach

him, to follow “poor master Albert, for feared he’d be losing his way, and feared the *rapparee* French would be murdering him in battle, and nobody there to see his beautiful corpse laid in holy ground.” Influenced by all these fears, Dermot O’Chanter, with a wallet stocked with respectable apparel, and with half a dozen tenpenny pieces in his purse, set out in a very few hours after Fauconberg, to share his fortunes.

As Dermot was obliged to travel on foot, and Fauconberg, more soaring, had given himself the swifter conveyance of a stage-coach roof, his poor follower did not overtake him until a few moments prior to his embarkation from the port of Dublin, where he had been detained by adverse winds; and never, perhaps, was astonishment greater than that of Fauconberg, when Dermot seized him by the arm, as he was stepping into the boat, which was to convey him to the merchantman, then getting under weigh for the port of London.

“Dermot O’Chanter!” Fauconberg exclaimed, in alarm, lest he was the bearer of a

mandate from his mother for his return.

“Dermod, what brought you here?”

“Ah! then sure it was yourself, master Albert dear!” Dermod replied, making his best scrape of obeisance; “for wasn’t it regard for you, that brought me so many miles upon your back, to be going the wide world over wid you, dear?”

There was now no moment for parley; and the distressed, but grateful Albert, was compelled to allow the attached follower of his fortunes to embark with him, though fearing him as a serious incumbrance, where a purse was, like his, so scantily supplied.

“But, what could have induced you to take this desperate step, my good Dermod?” demanded Albert, the first moment that presented an opportunity for private conference, when established on board the merchantman.

“Come, tell me the whole truth.”

“*Ough*, faith, ’tis truth herself you are sure to be having, master Albert dear, since ’tis from the bottom of a well she will appear to you.”

“ I do not understand you, Dermod.”

“ But, you stud under me, master darling, whin it wás from the bottom of a deep well you dragged up my poor shivering carcass, whin it was kilt myself was wid fright, on being drowneded; and, at the hazard of your own precious life you did it, and then drapped me at the feet of my poor cratur of a screeching mother, for no longer was the strength in you, to be lugging a bigger boy nor yourself; and so, master Albert, darling! that same moment, even sinseless as I was, I tuck a book oath widin myself, to stick by you to the last drap of my blood. And faith, but 'tis often since, myself has prayed for some trouble to befall you, dear, that the power might be mine, to be showing my gratitude for your saving the hearts of my poor father and mother from breaking, by your saving me from drownind.”

“ But, my dear and grateful Dermod,” said Albert,—on whose lip a sweet smile played, whilst a tear trembled in his intelligent eyes, at these effusions of O'Chanter's gratitude,—
“ But, I fear, this resolution of sticking by me

to the last drop of your blood, will be quite as likely to break the heart of your parents, as your being drowned would have done."

"I'd be entirely obliged to you, master Albert dear, not to be mentioning my poor father and mother to me, till my heart will get hardened a morsel by the say air," responded Dermod, endeavouring to suppress his rising tears. "But, sure it was, resigned themselves were to my coming after you, dear," he continued, "whin I tould them of my book oath, and that I'd be coming home to them a laurel-crowned grenadier. But *ochone*, master Albert, it was murdered wid grief I lift my mother in my poor father's arms; and whin he, the creatur, gave me his last blessing, it was like a corpse he stud, wid a face whiter nor his gray locks; and wid his frame quaking, and jaw quivering, he bade me follow my preserver, but never to see his face again if I brought disgrace upon my honest name, or suffered harrum to harrum the son of his sainted benefactor; but my mother, who had seemed as if she had no sorrow in her for my

going, for, widout so much as a look, let alone a word, she put up all my best clothes in the wallet, down to the cake off the griddle: when she came to give me a—a—par—parting—ki—kiss and blessing, she grasped me to her bosom with trembling hands, and instantly fell back into my father's arms, quite kilt by a swoon: and so—so—so, then my father bade me fly ere she would recover. But, master Albert dear, for the life of me, no, not even to follow you, could myself fly quite away, till I knew she would revive; so I ran out of the cabin, and scrambled upon the thatch, and looked down the chimney, widout interruption from the smoke, which never being an upright sarvant, was always found gadding out of doors; I therefore seen all that was passing below, and whin the creatur revived, and I heard her sobs—*ochone!* but they were bitter ones! I fled from the sound, and ran for the bare life, whin, ah! master Albert, but the trial was tough, for as luck would have it, there sat, as I ranted by her mother's cabin, Katty, singing to her wheel, as sweetly as the

banchee would have chanted out my death-song.

“As my death-song I felt it, master Albert, for it murdered me; so I turned me away from seeing her beautiful face, and stopped my ears from hearing her sweet planxty, and pelted on the faster; and when my breath would hold no longer, myself sat down comfortably under a hedge and cried, I’ll be bail, a nogginful of salt tears, till, at length, an awful sound, which struck on my ear like a chain lowering the bucket of a draw-well on the other side of the hedge, recalled me to myself; when, starting to my feet, I saw, or fancied, master Albert, that I saw, a spirit rising from the well, more beautiful even than Katty, or any beauty that the wide world contained: but whatever it was, master Albert dear, my glowing heart rose up to follow it, and the footsteps became firm that led me straight to you.”

This artless tale, of the influence of gratitude, was not imparted to an insensible auditor; and the gratitude of Fauconberg warmed to a reciprocation, which led him to adopt every

measure, short of compulsion, to induce Dermod to return to his parents and Kathleen; but nothing could vanquish the honest fellow's determination to remain with his preserver.

The limited state of Fauconberg's finances allowed not of tarrying in the alluring metropolis of England; he therefore winged his way with all possible expedition to join our army, then just entering Spain, and, as a volunteer, took the field of glory, where, as all who filled the ranks he fought in were sons of valour, it proved no easy task to obtain distinction; but he did obtain it, and was almost immediately presented an ensigncy, in honourable attestation of his unconquered commander's approbation.

Dermod, also, had joined the valiant band; and he, too, had signalized himself, "Just," he said, "to prove my being a true-born Irishman; but I'll not be proving myself a blundering one again, and success to the bull I mounted! by joining in the battle, to get the purpose knocked in the head, that brought me all the way from my own dear home—that

of guarding the precious life of my master dear."

No persuasion of his comrades could therefore succeed in inducing him to enlist; yet, wherever the post of danger was occupied by Fauconberg, there was the faithful Dermot to be found; and even to the cannon's mouth he followed "master Albert dear," with a degree of wild temerity, that made Fauconberg shudder, and led him also to try the powers of his rhetoric to persuade his follower to become a soldier, that when he encountered the perils of one, he might reap the advantages; but to no purpose. Dermot stood firm to what he considered his line of duty.

"For once a soldier, your honour," he said, "I would be having no power over my own actions; and if I would be ordered east, and you west, who, myself would be mighty glad to know, would be performing your shadow, master Albert dear?"

CHAPTER III.

SOME time prior to the lamented death of his father, Albert had heard that his brother's desire to become a soldier was unconquerable, and that his uncle had been compelled by his headstrong *protégé* to purchase a commission for him: it therefore was no surprise to Fauconberg, when Gustavus joined the brigade he served in, immediately after he had received the first reward of his valour.

In their childhood, these brothers had resided together beneath the paternal roof, when Albert, devotedly attached to Gustavus, had been his willing fag, and mirthful playmate; but when Gustavus removed to Fauconberg Castle, he allowed his natural dislike to writing to operate uncontrolledly, and rarely took the trouble of replying to the affectionate epistles of poor Albert; and as years rolled on, the

rich man's heir appeared to have forgotten, not only their affinity, but even the existence of his brother.

But this meeting in Spain seemed to revive the fraternal recollections of Mr. Rosstrevor. It was no exertion to take his brother by the hand, call him "my dear fellow," and share his pastime, as he did his toils and perils : nor did pride repel this renewal of amity, since few could be found to equal Albert Fauconberg in talents, manners, and appearance ; and, in valour, none to surpass him : whilst on Albert's part, as the lamp of affection had never been extinguished, — although he had sensibly felt his brother's conduct, — it soon resumed its bright and steady flame.

It was not very long after the re-union of these brothers, that, at the close of one of our contests with the enemy, Rosstrevor was reported "fallen in action ;" and the moment the afflicting intelligence was conveyed to Albert — whose prowess that day had been exercised on a station far apart from his brother — than, wild with grief and dismay, yet refusing

to receive the report as authentic; he flew to the scene of the late action, accompanied by the faithful Dermod; where, with all the anguish of trembling affection and writhing humanity, he searched amid those who had fallen; turning over with his own hand the now pallid corse of many a late blooming companion, in this agonizing scrutiny to find his brother; and at length, as presentiment seemed to anticipate, from amongst a pile of breathless warriors arranged for sad and hasty interment, he drew Gustavus; and, with a thrill of joy, almost too powerful to sustain, perceived that the vital spark was not extinguished.

With the feeble exertions of poor Dermod, who had not revealed to his "master dear" that a low fever was consuming his strength, and unfitting him for exertion, he removed his brother to a sheltered spot; and, after binding up his wound as well as he could, and leaving the uncomplaining Dermod to guard his helpless brother from the sanguinary wretches who hover near the field of battle for inhuman purposes, he hurried back to his victorious brigade

for chirurgical aid ; but which with difficulty he could procure, there having been so many wounded borne from the scene of action to their temporary hospital ; and to augment the distress of Fauconberg, he found the brigade expected orders to push forward in a very few hours.

Mr. M'Duff, the surgeon procured by Albert to dress his brother's wounds, pronounced them of a serious nature, although not mortal ; and that a removal to any distance, even half way to their nearest hospital, must inevitably prove fatal to him, in consequence of the great loss of blood he had sustained.

Not a *venta*,* *badegan*,† or monastery, was to be discerned in any direction ; and the aspect of the surrounding country gave no promise of any comfort for them : to the driest and most sheltered spot, therefore, within the compass allowed by M'Duff, was Rosstrevor moved, ere the necessary departure of the humane and skilful surgeon ; who promised to

* Solitary inn. † Pothouse.

send forthwith every possible necessary to them, from the regimental stores.

Here, then, was Rosstrevor laid, without other covering from the scorching beams of the sun, or the keen breath of night, than the branches of some spreading trees ; and his affectionate brother, aided by the drooping Dermod, commenced, with the rapidity of anxious attachment, cutting turf, cork bark, and underwood, for the purpose of erecting a hut to shelter him ; but Fauconberg had not been very long engaged in his arduous undertaking, when the uncomplaining Dermod dropped beside him in a swoon ; and, to his unspeakable grief and consternation, Albert found he had a sick friend, as well as a wounded brother, to provide for and attend.

The toil of Fauconberg was now necessarily increased, by the enlargement of his little hospital ; but ere night closed in, the indefatigable artificer completed his rude structure, and found its inhabitants still further, most unexpectedly, and distressingly, augmented.

In seeking materials for his structure, Albert

was startled by hearing a gentle groan amid the underwood he was cutting from, when, on promptly seeking the individual whose aspirations had roused him, he, with pity and dismay, discovered the interesting Cameron lying there, wounded, and rifled of great part of his clothing, and of the whole of his military accoutrements.

Cameron had been wounded in the latter part of the conflict of that day, and in the most dangerous position in which he could have been exposed; for to court danger ever appeared his aim: but the hand of Providence had heretofore seemed to intervene, to frustrate the accomplishment of his fatal purpose; for he had never before bled.

When the ball struck him, Cameron fell, deprived of the power of joining his victorious companions in their pursuit of the retreating foe; but at length, having contrived to bind up his wound, he set out upon an anxious endeavour to rejoin some part of the army; but he had only crawled a little way, when a ruffian burst from ambush upon him, and Cameron

drawing from his bosom a pistol, which private causes had led him to conceal there, refused to comply with the brigand's demand, "to deliver his purse." Instantly the ruffian aimed his pistol at the heart of Cameron, who, in self-defence, fired, and the robber fell, uttering a sort of demoniac shout, which attracted from a close thicket two more of the horde, who, with dreadful denunciations of vengeance for having shot their captain, first commenced the gratification of their avarice by a greedy seizure of his property; and then were proceeding to execute their vindictive threats, when the barking of dogs, and the voices of persons in rapid advance, arrested the performance of their sanguinary purpose; and, in alarm for their own safety, they therefore raised their wounded chief upon their shoulders, and, as swiftly as such an incumbrance would admit of, sought concealment in a neighbouring wood.

The voices which effected this most providential rescue, proved to be those of a large party of shepherds, travelling with their Merino

flocks to the more inaccessible parts of their *Agostoderòs*, or summer retreats, out of the range of the contending armies; when some of them, feeling commiseration for the poor wounded Englishman, kindly bound up his wound more effectually than he himself had done, gave him a draught of the mayoral's Malaga, to recruit his spirits, and then put him into the road by which he might rejoin the British army.

But, exhausted from loss of blood, and in agony from the not yet extracted ball, Cameron was unable to make his way, though urged on by apprehension of the return of the brigands; to glut their vengeance; and not long before he had been fortunately discovered by Fauconberg, he had crawled into the shelter of some underwood, with which the spot abounded, and laid himself down, expecting death in the most appalling form.

For his little hospital, Fauconberg could procure no other couch than the driest of the *esparto* rushes he could find; but M'Duff had kindly sent a supply of blankets; and, in

further kindness, this skilful surgeon, true to his promise, returned in the evening to visit Gustavus, when he also dressed the wound of Cameron, (after successfully extracting the ball), and prescribed for Dermod, whose case he pronounced not dangerous; and ere his departure, undertook to obtain from the commander of their division leave of absence for Fauconberg, whose military services were not likely to be immediately required.

Albert anxiously watched through the night by his suffering charge, consoling them with anticipating the increase of comforts the morrow would enable him to procure from the regimental stores. But the morrow brought bitter disappointment to his sanguine expectations; for, at early dawn, M'Duff appeared with the leave of absence he had obtained for Fauconberg, to perform his professional services, and to instruct Albert how to manage his patients, whilst left to his sole care, which for some days they were likely to be, as M'Duff brought with him the unpleasant intelligence, that the brigade had not only moved on to join

another, in preparation for some grand attack ; but the wounded had been compelled to undergo the hazard of removal from that desolate part of the country, where nothing could be procured for their comforts ; and, in consequence of this removal, M'Duff would be stationed at too great a distance to continue his attendance. However, as some consolation, he promised, ere the division should have marched too far to render it practicable, once more to visit his little hospital ; or to send some skilful substitute ; and without delay to furnish some further supplies, both for comfort and necessity.

Poor Fauconberg had so many duties to fulfil, that he had no time for giving rest to his frame, after the severe toils of the preceding day, and anxious vigil of the night : still he found he must work industriously, to improve his hut for the accommodation of its inhabitants ; to cut and collect wood for fuel, and to gather wild fruit, within the limits of his foraging rounds ; for upon an extent of ramble he durst not venture ; as, in that case, he must

leave his precious, helpless charge unguarded; and that the aspect of the country forbade, as the whole scene surrounding the spot, where ruthless fate had stationed them, seemed expressly formed by nature for the establishment of banditti.

The hut of Fauconberg was erected upon a link of a long chain of thickly wooded crags, which wound round the base of a range of stupendous mountains, overhanging a deep and narrow glen of considerable extent, so shaded by the close contact of the luxuriant branches of the oak, the cork, and the wild olive trees, which flourished on each boundary, that its dark and almost impenetrable gloom seemed to proclaim its danger to the devoted traveller, who slowly wound his way along the narrow path which safety permitted only a single mule to pace; whilst elevated mounds for points of wary observation, — innumerable cavities in the rocks for ambush, or retreat, — the incessant babbling of the numerous rills that trickled down from steep to steep, until, foaming into cascades, they rushed

into the ravine, allowing no sound of footsteps to place the destined victim on the defensive, must give the brigand so many advantages, none could doubt that such auxiliaries were not held out in vain : and that such formidable neighbours were not the mere chimera of Fauconberg's own depressed fancy — the attack upon Cameron, with the monumental crosses to be seen through every vista, in conspicuous elevation, bore too certain testimony.

But, though his foraging rounds were thus confined by the alarming aspect of his situation — “ He who providentially caters for the sparrow,” sent to Fauconberg a welcome, an invaluable supply. In his frequent perambulations of his circumscribed rounds, he discovered a wild goat and her kid, sleeping under close shelter from the rays of a meridian sun ; and as his back was then laden with stakes to fence his hut, he, with all the ingenuity of an Alexander Selkirk, promptly hemmed in the animals ; and having in the hut the few utensils Dermod's canteen contained, with what the kindness of M'Duff had

added, he was enabled, after some very awkward ineffectual attempts at milking, to bring to his invalids some of the salutary nourishment his prize supplied.

Ere night closed in, the impatient Fauconberg sallied forth to make his last observation from an eminence, commanding the path he eagerly panted to behold the messenger from M'Duff pacing, with the promised and most requisite supplies.

It is not easy for the human mind to relinquish the soothing hope which seems its only stay; and therefore Albert lingered long to look, but still in vain; and with a heart saddened by disappointment, he returned to his wounded and sick, without bringing one increase of comfort to them but his presence; yet, little anticipating how the misery of their situation had been augmented during the moments of his absence.

CHAPTER IV.

A MAN had been deposited by some peasants in the unoccupied corner of the hut; and this unwelcome deposit represented himself to be a French officer, "who, too ill to proceed with his regiment on its late hasty march, had crept the preceding day, for shelter, into a cottage about a league distance from Albert's hut: a cottage which had been abandoned by its inhabitants on the approach of the contending armies; but who had returned from the mountains, on the restoration of tranquillity, by the retreat of the troops from that spot."

"No one," this stranger said, "could suppose they would consider the sick intruder, who had preceded them in the occupation of their dwelling, a welcome guest; but few in a Christian land, could have meditated the barbarity of turning a helpless being out of

shelter ; yet such was the prompt determination of those savages, who, without compunction, were hastening to bear him into an adjacent forest, to perish at leisure ; when one of their sons, returning from his refuge, informed his inhuman bearers of a hut he had seen erected for the accommodation of some wounded English, and to this hut they had instantly resolved upon bearing him."

And accordingly, caring nothing what might become of the wounded man, these savages did bring the intruder, to add disease, of they knew not what contagious nature, to the miseries of the wounded sufferers ; and upon the rush mattress the stranger had taken possession of in the absence of these peasants, with the extended boon of a blanket, they bore him to our hut, and there left him amid the powerless occupants they found.

The dismay of Fauconberg can be better imagined than described ; and the conflict in his bosom, between humanity and alarm for those he loved, was severe ; for he knew not

what fatally infectious disease might thus be introduced among them; and the solemn assurances of the stranger — “that his malady was of no communicable nature,” yielded him no confidence; whilst the melting tones, in which his supplications for pity and shelter were uttered, wound round Albert’s commiseration, and induced him to permit the intruder to remain; an act of benevolence, which poor Cameron strongly urged, and Rosstrevor faintly acceded to; whilst Dermod declared, in the tremulous tones of weakness, — “That if death was thus introduced to his master dear, through the gates of humanity, he’d be the man, dead or alive, to close them on the French humbugger, and murder him in return.”

Apprehensive that cruel necessity might make providence, in all things, a painful duty, Fauconberg delayed as long as possible to light one of two wax candles, the portable stores of Dermod had supplied; and he almost wished he had allowed it to remain

for ever in their stores, when its beams gave to his recoiling view the visage of the stranger ; for that seemed most unequivocally to proclaim — “ disease was conveying the contriver and perpetuator of every direful crime to the regions of everlasting punishment.”

The only luxury Albert had the power of providing for himself, was a chunk of wood to sit upon ; and, resting on that, he passed his second night’s vigil ; since for him there was no space for recumbency of posture. And now, many a painful apprehension being added to the anxiety of his heart for the fate of the helpless trio who depended upon him, every disposition to slumber was destroyed. His stores from Dermod’s *havre-sac*, and from his own and his brother’s less productive ones, were alarmingly small ; and even aided by M’Duff’s supply of arrow-root, and his own capture of the milch-goat, he foresaw with terror, that they could not sustain for many days the party now collected in the hut ; and to quit his charge in quest of aid or

comforts for them, he feared, as a measure too replete with dangers to be adopted ; for the savage peasants, who had dared in his absence to invade their asylum, might repeat their incursion for the sake of plunder ; and in horror he conceived the probability, that pillage alone would not content them.

Apprehensions like these led Fauconberg naturally to reflect upon the defensive measures within his limited power to adopt ; he had only his military weapon, a trusty sword. Dermot's self-provided magazine for the preservation of his master, had not been used sparingly in the late carnage : M'Duff had sent them a brace of pistols and a small portion of ammunition for defence ; and Dermot's musket he had to look to for supplying provisions, should the adjacent woods afford any ; and upon this review, though satisfied with the number of his weapons, he was by no means so at his stock of ammunition, when there appeared so strong a presumption of there being a second arbitrary demand upon its expenditure.

The stranger had solemnly assured Fauconberg, that the inhuman peasants had deprived him of every defensive weapon: however, a poniard in his belt escaped not the observation of Fauconberg, notwithstanding the intruder's endeavours to conceal it; and this he at length determined to take into his own possession; not that he apprehended *Monsieur's* having immediate power to turn it against him, but he firmly believed, the moment the deceiver could use it, he would not hesitate to stab his helpless companions as they slept; for, although his declarations of gratitude were profuse, when the humanity of Fauconberg led him to share with him the little nourishment he had to distribute, yet the aspect of determined malignity he saw him assume, whenever he fancied himself unobserved, led Albert to believe that his heart was full of vindictive hatred to British soldiers, who had so often baffled the hitherto invincible arms of his countrymen.

Once determined, Albert delayed not to request the poniard might be delivered to his

care, under the courteous plea, "of removing it from incommoding *Monsieur* in his recumbency."

"I am not your prisoner, sir," replied the stranger haughtily; "I am not therefore called upon to deliver up my arms to you."

"No," Fauconberg responded, "but you are my guest; and, as such, I wish to provide for your comfort and safety as effectually as the distresses of my situation will permit. The peasants, who brought you hither, may assail my fortress for plunder; and it is my duty to prevent their finding a supply of arms here, to turn against the only defender your unfortunate situation has left you: I therefore demand your arms, in the name of prudence."

Monsieur had nothing to offer, in resistance to this courteous plea. He delivered up his poniard; but, as he did so, the exulting grin which accompanied his acquiescence, betrayed to his wary observer, that truth was not in him, and that he had more arms concealed

The fever of Rosstrevor ran alarmingly

high this night; for, independently of the agony his wounds inflicted, he had been indulged by his uncle in the lap of luxurious ease, and was therefore unschooled in privations, until he had joined the army on actual service: having never before been confined one hour to his bed by sickness, he knew not how to endure the unmitigated sufferings of his situation; and by constant restlessness and irritation, accompanied by audible lamentations, cruelly disturbed his fellow sufferers, and as cruelly increased the distress of his affectionate brother; and by adding so painfully to the bitter regrets of poor Dermod, for all the privations and toil he saw his "master dear" doomed to undergo, considerably increased his bodily ailment.

Of all the patients in Fauconberg's charge, Cameron was the greatest sufferer; yet he was the one of all who gave the least trouble to his sympathizing friend. Mental maladies, almost more than mortal firmness could sustain, he had endured, and that had haply taught him to consider all bodily pangs of

comparative unimportance. His fortitude, therefore, bore him through his agonies without a groan; and with the sadly placid smile of resignation on his lip, he met the anxious glances of his friend, or gave his hand the firm pressure of ardent gratitude, whenever its offices of humanity led it in contact with his own; and often, during this night of misery, he importuned poor Fauconberg "to place his trust on high." Fauconberg did place his trust on high; yes, and he devoutly prayed too; for soldiers can be pious men.

The moment morning's dawn gave him the first glimmer of its light, Fauconberg extinguished his candle, and hastened from the hut, to milk his prize, and gather aromatic herbs to burn in the hut, as specifics against the chances of infection; and to purify the air from the oppressive effluvia evidently arising from the intruder's having fed largely on garlic, and from his neglect of personal neatness; a neglect which, from having no extent of wardrobe, seemed irremediable.

Fauconberg had resolutely abstained the two preceding days from participating in any species of nourishment, save a few wild strawberries, that he might not diminish the little stock he had for his poor invalids: so that it was with no small degree of pleasure he discovered the vestiges of a rabbit warren, whilst gathering his herbs; and ingenuity, with recollection of boyish exploits, teaching him to form a snare, he soon caught a young rabbit; and the same juvenile achievements having instructed him further, he was now enabled to execute the preparatory steps for cooking this welcome supply of food for himself at a neighbouring rill; for so many streams trickled from the overhanging mountain, to flow in different courses, to swell the roaring torrent below, that he could afford himself and friends the luxurious delicacy of separate rills for every purpose he required.

With his rabbit, and a large supply of fragrant herbs, Albert returned to the hut, after two days of almost complete abstinence, to cook his breakfast; when Gustavus loudly

complaining of the smell of meat broiling being unpleasant to him, his affectionate brother instantly removed into the open air, where he set about kindling a fire ; and as he did so, Dermod wept bitterly.

“ Were it not for the tones of your voice, any one must conclude you to be some love-stricken damsel, who had followed Mr. Faconberg to the wars in disguise, you blubbering blockhead !” said Rosstrevor, pettishly.

“ But if you shed tears, my good fellow, at every new toil you see your poor master engaged in, you can never recover to assist him,” said Cameron, in the plaintive tones of his mild resignation.

“ *Ochone,*” sobbed out Dermod, “ the damsel, who, may be, would have come wid me to the wars, only myself set out unknownct to her, I will never be seeing more ; for soon I will be kilt wid grief, to be seeing my master dear shutting himself up here, in perfect health, in this pest-house, to be murdering himself wid fatigues and privations for us, who

may be, and bad manners to us, have not the grace to be one morsel thankful."

"Surely, Dermod, you are not breaking your grateful heart because your justly dear master is in health amongst us?" said Cameron.

"No, your honour, no; heaven forbid he would be otherwise! Irishmen, Mr. Cameron, have a quare way of expressing their thoughts; but our hearts never blunder, your honour, in betraying our feelings, whin 'tis gratitude that causes the overflow."

"You Scotchmen never blunder," said Gustavus, with a sneer. "Your hearts are too calm to operate upon the cool deliberation of your heads."

"I believe," responded Cameron, mildly, to the sarcasm of Rosstrevor, "that a Scotchman's head generally governs his heart; an Irishman's heart his head; while an Englishman's heart and head, like church and state, bear their appropriate part, and the result becomes more perfect."

Whilst Cameron faintly spoke, the stranger, who professed not to comprehend one word of English, succeeded in raising himself on his elbow, to make his observations, at the moment Albert entered; and who, in his turn making observations, caught a glimpse of a pistol peeping from the intruder's bosom.

"I perceive," said Albert, in French, to him, "that you have no confidence in me as a protector, since you have retained your pistols to guard yourself; but now learn, *monsieur*, that no armed man shall remain here but myself. Mark me; I am in the full strength of perfect health, you are subdued to unresisting feebleness by malady, and instantly will I hurl you into the ravine below, if you do not confide your pistols to my care."

"Pistols!" vociferated the stranger: "*Mon Dieu*, what a charge!" and, with the most horrible imprecations upon his own head if he were insincere, he affirmed, "he had only one pistol, and that having been the last gift of a dying brother, he had retained it as a treasure of affection, which he had vowed never to part

with;" and then, beaming the hypocritical smile of a specious parasite, he drew a pistol from his bosom, "to confide to the chivalric honour of a noble Englishman."

Fauconberg took the pistol, and conveyed it to a place of concealment from its owner; and with a painful suspicion lingering in his mind of its having a fellow, which the appalling expression of malignity the countenance of this stranger wore whenever he conceived himself unobserved, led to the firm conviction in the mind of Fauconberg, that he would not scruple to turn against them whenever his vindictive feelings should find an occasion to vent themselves.

When Fauconberg next re-entered the hut, his brother desired him "to go in quest of a messenger to despatch to his valet, whom he had left at ——— with his horses and baggage."

"And you can write a line for me to Kelly," continued Rosstrevor, "and order him to come hither forthwith, and bring my bedding and some clothes, and every thing he can

muster for my comfort; and then I shall be able to quit this infernal place, and you will have more room to move and to cook your delicate repasts."

"And whilst I am seeking this messenger," replied Albert, "who is to guard and attend you all? And admitting that I may achieve the improbability of procuring a Mercury, do you think it likely he should find Kelly at ———? Was it not your order that he should follow the troops?"

"Well, then, the Mercury must follow the troops to find him."

"I fear I cannot flatter you with any hope of that; for if there existed a facility of communication with our division, why have not the supplies arrived which M'Duff promised? Can you for one moment imagine M'Duff would have left us in this forlorn state voluntarily?"

"The rules of the profession admit not of his making us remunerate his services; and men are not over fond of much trouble in serving others without a recompense."

“ Were all men so mercenary as you conceive them to be,” exclaimed Cameron, with animation, “ you, Mr. Rosstrevor, would not be now lying on that bed of rushes, even comfortless as you find it.”

“ That is true,” returned Gustavus; “ but to follow up this Quixotism of having rescued your elder brother from death, throw off this lazy fit, Albert, my good lad, sally forth to seek adventures in pursuit of a messenger; and give me the chance, at least, of recovery, by striving to obtain chirurgical attendance, and proper comforts for me; unless, indeed, you have repented of your fraternal kindness; for, in that case, the plan you have adopted is certainly a judicious one. Yes, thus hurry my exit, and our uncle’s entailed property must be yours ultimately.”

“ Oh, Gustavus!” exclaimed his heart-wrung brother, as he started from his comfortless seat to sally forth, and save himself from such a suspicion; but, alive to all his duties, even his wounded feelings of fraternal love prevented not his pausing, ere he com-

menaced his unpromising search for a courier, to leave a portion of the very small stock of sustenance in his possession near to the miserable couch of each helpless sufferer; and, as he thus provided for the nourishment of Cameron, he knelt to whisper him, as he privately gave a loaded pistol to his care.

“Your wound prevents you sleeping; observe *monsieur*, and, if necessary, use this at discretion.”

“*Och*, thin, that the madam was but here,” exclaimed Dermod, with all the emphatic energy his weakness could command, “to be ordering your honour, master Albert darling, not to be going murdering yourself in getting what won’t be found.”

“My mother here!” exclaimed Fauconberg in horror. “No, not for ten thousand worlds, would I have my beloved, my honoured mother here, to see her sons in such a situation.”

A deep groan from Cameron drew Albert to him in dismay, fearing some serious accident had befallen him.

“Speak to me,” he cried. “Oh! what has happened?”

“Nothing new,” Cameron replied, pressing his hand with fervour. “Wounds are painful inflictions. May heaven shield you, my friend, from either mental or bodily.”

“I conceive,” said the stranger, “if I rightly interpret your gestures, that you are going in quest of some messenger; and, perhaps, my grateful heart may have the gratification of procuring one without much trouble. I have two faithful friends belonging to my brigade, who are so devoted to me, and I to them, that we never fail, after every engagement, to seek each other out should any one of us be missing; and the signal agreed upon to aid us in such search is to fire, or cause to have fired every hour, three shots; first one, and after a full pause, two in rapid succession.”

“I thank you, sir,” Fauconberg replied; “but I cannot expend my ammunition upon the mere chance of your friends having lingered behind the retreating army.”

CHAPTER V.

ERE Fauconberg sallied forth upon his hopeless mission, he barricaded the entrance to the hut against the possibility of intrusion from straying animals; and, in return for this diminution of air, increased the magnitude of ventilators in the roof, and then proceeded on his way, penciling on his tablets as he went notices for retracing his footsteps, since, without such a precaution, so intricate was each winding path, he was convinced he never should find his way back to his helpless charge.

And yet it was a task of no small difficulty to bestow his attention on this necessary measure, so many unpleasant apprehensions were continually intruding on his mind, and none more poignantly than the unkindness of his brother. Nor were the suspicions he cherished of the stranger likely to tranquillize the dis-

quietude of his bosom: whether the story of his attached friends were false or true, it could not but excite alarm: were there no such individuals, then the pretended signals were to have been adopted for the obvious purpose of expending his defensive store; and were there actually such persons in quest of him, their being his friends presented sufficient cause for considering them as objects of alarm.

For several hours Fauconberg wandered through a fatiguing intricacy of country; and, although he discovered a few miserable huts in a sort of hamlet, the inhabitants had all been dispersed by the French invaders, and none had yet returned, save one woman, from whom he purchased a bottle of cow's milk, but she would not give him any clew to lead him to the haunts of men; and all he obtained by his long perambulation was this new milk, and to have his *havresac* filled with apples and wild strawberries.

Innumerable was the game which sprang in the path of Fauconberg, but he would not waste one shot to obtain food, which he alone

must consume, since the apprehensions which circumstances had led him to imbibe presented an interdict to his expending any of his ammunition, without some imperative motive.

When at length poor Albert returned to his little hospital, he found all things as he had left them; for even the fretful petulance of Rosstrevor was unsubdued; and this disappointment to his hopes, by the unsuccessful termination of his brother's researches, only increased the irritation of his nerves; yet, peevish and unthankful as he was, he gladly availed himself of the palatable food procured by Albert, who gave strawberries and milk to each invalid, not omitting even the intruder: he was sick, and pity presented a claim for him, which the heart of Fauconberg could not resist.

But, from the luxury he distributed, Fauconberg resolutely abstained. He had in the morning broiled the whole of his rabbit, to prevent a possible repetition of annoyance to his brother that day; so he now made his well-earned dinner from the fragments of his

morning's repast, slaking his thirst at the purest rill in his domain; and after supplying his goat and her kid with the same beverage, and repairing the damage their enclosure had sustained from their ineffectual efforts to escape, he found himself so overpowered by drowsiness from toil, and a long arrear of sleep, that he determined, ere the sun went down, to take upon the sward before the hut, beneath the shelter of a spreading tree, the repose his frame required; and, entering the hut to proclaim his intention, Rosstrevor exclaimed, in tones of bitter asperity—

“Had you searched as diligently for a messenger to summon Kelly, as the exigency of the case demanded, you might now, most probably, have had the power of weltering in the luxury of my camp-cloak.”

“*Augh*, faith, master Gusty,” said Dermot, who, something of an humourist, never omitted addressing him by that abbreviation of his name, when he perceived his temper ruffled, “had not my master dear proved himself the

most elegant searcher that ever diligence led on, or the exigency of any case demanded, your honour, master Gusty, might now have had the power of weltering in your own thick blood, as comely a corpse as ever crow fed upon. But, master darling, take my coat, and if it was but spun from the veins and arteries of its poor owner's heart, it would warm you, I'll be bail, and keep you safe from every harrum [harm]."

"Could the heart of an emperor be spun from the materials of yours, it would be his richest treasure," said Fauconberg, sensibly affected. "But keep your coat, my kind Dermot; since not for worlds would I place it in the way of damp to injure you hereafter. And, now, set your fears at rest. I shall sustain no ill. I have before now soundly and sweetly slumbered beneath the blue canopy of heaven, with the green velvet of nature's manufacture for my couch, and such luxuries never have injured me."

To his sward-couch Fauconberg now hastened, and in a very few moments his slumber

became profound; but shortly it was dissipated by the zeal of faithful attachment. Poor Dermod, awaking from one of the transient dozes of sickness, observed his master had thrown off his cap by some movement as he slept, when, alarmed for his health, the grateful creature crawled out on his hands and knees, for he was unable to arise and walk, and strove, with all the gentleness of affectionate anxiety, to replace it without awaking the sleeper, but in vain.

“Dermod!” exclaimed Albert, “what could possess you to come into the air?”

“I won’t be the worse for it, your honour; I strove not to awaken you; but since I have done that same, I won’t be sorry; bekease myself wisht you to be moving a morsel out of that French divil’s sight, bekease there he lies cocking his game eye at you, the squinter of the world! as if himself had a musket wid him in the bed, and was trying to take aim at your precious life.”

“Fear nothing of that kind at present,” returned Fauconberg; “he will not, now at

least, attempt to injure me, on whom his sole dependence rests for aid and nourishment.”

“That same is a sure thing; but myself thinks, whin ’tis better he will be getting, which I am afeard he will, we must be keeping a cute eye on him; for I don’t think he’d be the one to mind murdering the whole kit of us in cool blood, bekease we have the honour and happiness of being Englishmen, that is Irishmen and Scotchmen. And, indeed, master Albert, instid of saying my proper prayers, since he thrust his grim visage in amongst us, widout leave or license, and bad manners to him! to disturb our happiness, (that is, whin master Gusty would be letting us taste a morsel;) I am catching myself in the middle of the Litany, imploring, all unknownct to myself, ‘for deliverance from pestilence and famine, murder and sudden death;’ and ever so often I have thought, for to be sure, master Albert dear, it could only be conceit, that I heard the dear, beautiful, tremulous voice of my darlintg ould father, good luck to him, making the response.”

“ Well now, my good fellow, having performed all that is kind by me,” said Fauconberg, “ be prudent, and return to your bed.”

“ No, your honour, go you to sleep onct more, and I’ll be watching by you ; for the pure air of heaven has revived me so much, that myself thinks I will be able to-morrow, or the next day, or, at any rate, the day after, to be tattering after the army, to bring relief to our distressed garrison.”

“ From being totally ignorant of the art of healing,” replied his master, “ I know not whether the air is good for you, or not ; as Mr. M’Duff attributes your indisposition to climate.”

“ Faith, then, your honour ! if Spanish climate widout can knock me on the head, French climate widin will pull me by the nose into my coffin : so, master dear, let me die the sweetest death. And now, your honour, before you go to sleep, I’ll just be after making bould to say — that as food, proper for Master Gusty and Lieutenant Cameron, is the scarcest

to be procured in this land, which is not like our own, flowing with milk and honey, I'd be entirely obliged to you if you'd be putting me on more substantial diet; bekease, it breaks the heart widin me, to be taking the milk and the fruit you toil to get, and then refrain from: and I having no appetite at all, at all, the comfortless scraps you allow yourself I'd be entirely obliged to you, if you permit me to partake of."

"We will talk of that another time," said Fauconberg, kindly; "but now, my good Dermod, comfortless as your bed is, oblige me by returning to it."

To oblige "master Albert," was a resistless plea, which the heart of Dermod led him instantly to comply with; when soon, in the midst of his melancholy and perplexing meditations, Fauconberg again sunk into that repose his wearied frame required.

But long this mentally and bodily harassed young man was not doomed to benefit by the renovating power of sleep; for once more he was awakened by the touch of faithful attach-

ment; when, starting up in alarm, he found it was no noxious assailant, but the tongue of his dog Carlo making his fond recognition, that had dissipated his repose.

This poor animal had been left in care of the detachment that guarded the baggage; but, miserable in the absence of his master and Dermod, he effected his escape, and went in search of them; and probably, in consequence of Fauconberg's perambulations that day, the sagacious animal discovered the scent he was in quest of, and thus traced the object of his faithful attachment.

After the almost frantic joy of Carlo had in some degree subsided, at this re-union with his friends — for he rushed into the hut, and paid his compliments to the amazed Dermod — he ran to a rill, quenched his thirst, then returned to his master, whom he patted with his paw, as if importuning for food; and then laid himself down at his feet, evidently exhausted by his mazy wanderings.

“Alas!” sighed Fauconberg, “my poor Carlo, you are come to miserable quarters;

and much, I fear, you must turn sportsman for your own table, as your master will be posed to find you in food, without ammunition for his gun:" and whilst he proceeded to collect the bones of the rabbit, as a scanty meal for Carlo, he compared himself to a pauper, who still rejoices at the addition made to his cares by the birth of a child, though without means of affording it subsistence.

The arrival of Carlo added a new cloud to the irritable temper of Rosstrevor.

"For why," he said, "could not Kelly trace him out, as the dog had done his master? But he was the most unfortunate man breathing. He had no friend that cared for him sufficiently to take the trouble of seeking him."

A most singular species of laughter now burst from the stranger. It sounded like the chuckle of exultation; but it might be that of the mental wanderings of sickness; yet Albert was startled by it, for it introduced the suspicion of this man's understanding the Eng-

lish language; and this surmise considerably augmented the alarms his bosom had imbibed, relative to this mysterious stranger.

Carlo, too, seemed to cherish unfavourable impressions of this intruder, for the moment his strange risibility struck on the animal's ear, he flew at the man; and by force alone could Fauconberg prevent his fastening on him; but nothing could put a period to his growling, which was so fierce, that Rosstrevor swore "he should be shot, if he did not cease."

And this was a fate which Fauconberg thought not unlikely to be in store for poor Carlo, by the hand of *Monsieur*; as every new observation he made upon this man, led him more and more to believe him a deceiver: but when, at length, necessity compelled him to light their partly consumed candle, the eagerness with which this suspicious personage concealed his face from the observation of Cameron, introduced at once a painful conviction into the mind of Albert, of whom their cruel destiny had conducted to their hut of

discomfort, to convert it into one of alarming insecurity.

To impart to the suffering Cameron "that he felt convinced, the brigand who had aimed at his life, now shared his asylum," Albert considered a cruelty not to be adopted; since the natural apprehensions it must awaken, no doubt, would impede his recovery. To intimate his terrible belief to his brother, or Dermot, would prove equally replete with danger to them; and in the case of Gustavus, useless also; as his right arm was for the present totally powerless.

What, then, in possibility, could poor Fauconberg attempt, for effecting their security against this specious brigand? He could not despatch him as he there lay, for that would be direct murder: he could not remain upon guard, day after day, in awful preparation for the moment that was to justify his sending a bullet through the ruffian's head: he could not, on the morrow, hasten to deliver him up to justice, for he knew not the road to any alguazil mayor; and the route he had marched

with his regiment to the late scene of action, he could not retrace without a guide; but, if even these impediments could be vanquished, he knew not if justice would as promptly set about its part as in his own country; and, admitting that he was to set out to seek this probably *ignis fatuus*, who was to protect his helpless charge?

In vain did Fauconberg send every mental faculty upon anxious research, for expedients to aid him in his difficulties, until it darted into his remembrance, that he had never yet seen this alarming man take even the most trifling portion of repose; a large arrear of sleep was, therefore, due to him; and Albert instantly conceived the project of beguiling him into a profound slumber by the aid of laudanum, with which M'Duff had supplied him, for the use of Cameron and Ross-trevor.

As soon as Fauconberg decided upon this expedient, he also determined not to make his attempt at administering it until the approach of day, lest its effects might cease to

operate ere he returned : and now, with joy, he beheld this alarming guest performing his usual vigil with him ; as now Albert looked upon every sleepless moment auspicious to his project.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was about midnight, when all in Fauconberg's hut, but himself and the intruder, were buried in profound repose, that at no great distance a whistle, loud and shrill, disturbed the solemn stillness of the hour. Instantly the fierce bark of Carlo was its response, but, smothered in its utterance by his master's influence, reached not the exterior; nor was his bark repeated, since the well-taught animal, obedient to control, knew that silence was now his duty; yet, with eyes riveted on his master, he awaited for signals to spring forward, or again sound forth his deep-toned note.

But Carlo was not all whom the self-possession of Fauconberg had to silence in a response; for on sound of the whistle, the intruder, starting from his recumbent posture, drew from his breast a whistle; but, ere he could carry it to his lips, Fauconberg, levelling

a pistol at his head, exclaimed, in French : —
“ Sound that whistle, sir, and you are a dead man ! ”

“ *Diable d'enfer !* ” he vociferated, as he reluctantly dropped the whistle ; then recollecting his mild sycophancy, he continued : —
“ but I thought, my kind, my tender, my benevolent protector, I thought you expected relief for these poor suffering gentlemen ; and doubted not, nor can you doubt, that signal proceeded from those who are bearing you supplies.”

“ I will not confide in succour that bears a midnight whistle for its herald,” said Fauconberg, determinately ; “ that whistle of yours, sir, is an objectionable appendage, and I demand it.”

“ Dermod,” continued Albert, for now all in the hut were widely awake, “ contrive to hide our light from external observation ; but be careful not to extinguish it. My post is to watch over this man, who instantly shall pay the forfeit of his life, if he answer any signal.”

The pause after this was long and awful, but

at length this painful silence was dissolved by another sounding of the same singularly shrill-toned whistle; but at a distance so great, that only from the stillness which reigned, could it have been so distinctly heard.

The intruder instantly sunk down upon his pallet, uttering a deep groan, as if some hope he had confidently cherished was now destroyed. Albert resumed his seat, and laid down his pistol; but his watchful observation of his suspicious guest was yet intense.

The intruder had, during the preceding nights, drank frequently and unsparingly of apple-water; which Dermod, from having seen his mother make for her sick neighbours, had instructed his master how to manufacture. Fauconberg had, therefore, prepared a hornful of this potation, mingled with laudanum; and when the man, overpowered by the parching thirst which consumed him, demanded, with sullen ferocity, "was it meant to keep him there without succour, to die like a dog? or was he to be allowed even a draught of water to sustain him?" Albert presented the

medicated horn to him ; but not without some uneasy apprehensions, lest he might discover the drug, and reject it ; but drought, combined with fury, made him drink greedily the whole contents, without pausing to consult his palate ; but, as he set down the empty horn, he complained of a decayed apple having been used in the composition, and said, “ there were plenty of wild grapes to be found in the neighbourhood for making *agraz*.”*

With a heart full of gratitude to Heaven, Fauconberg beheld the success of the first step towards the accomplishment of his anxious project ; nor were those likely to sleep, now in danger of being disturbed by Rosstrevor ; for though he knew not, nor conjectured, half the causes his brother had for serious alarm, yet the suspicious whistle, and Albert’s subsequent conduct, had filled him with apprehensions of banditti ; and he thought it prudent, for once in his life, to call his impatience to order, lest his moans or murmurs might serve

* Drink made of the juice of unripe grapes.

as guides for those on their nocturnal prow, to enter and despatch their helpless victims.

At length the notes of chanticleer announced to the anxious Fauconberg that there was dawn to light him on a hitherto unexplored path, in search of means to rid his hut of his alarming guest; and the profound slumber of the intruder led him to hope, that now with safety to his friends, at least from this man's designs, he might sally forth. This deep sleep had been resolutely battled with by the drowsy man, who had evidently some potent cause for wishing to keep vigil; but the laudanum was powerful, and its effects could not be parried.

The domestic vocations of our young soldier were so numerous, that he was compelled to exert all his activity to expedite their performance; yet he executed them with kindness, and attention to the comforts and safety of those he was leaving without mortal protection; not forgetting even poor Carlo's claim for a full share from the rabbit warren: but had it not been for this claim, Albert

would not have delayed to cook what he had snared ; but trusted to the mercy of Providence for his day's food, in his expected long perambulation.

To aid in the security of those for whose ultimate safety he was thus compelled to leave them, Fauconberg covered the exterior of the hut with newly gathered branches, so artificially placed, as wholly to effect its concealment amid the mass of surrounding foliage. The pistol of the intruder he had found loaded ; and although its being so, increased his alarm at the owner, he could not but hail the addition it made to his defensive stores. This pistol he now gave to Dermod, and providing himself with the fellow of that in the possession of Cameron, he slung his havresac and Dermod's musket across his shoulders to give him the appearance of an ostensible pursuit : and thus equipped, he at length sallied forth, attended by Carlo ; since his master deemed it unwise to leave him in the hut, lest his inevitable barking might betray the dwelling to any unwelcome guests ; and as to welcome

arrivals, such must be left to the chance of missing those they sought; for the danger which menaced this isolated hospital wore too serious an aspect for the mere and now, alas! improbable chance of any succour from the army, to preponderate against the measures which Fauconberg had found it necessary to adopt.

His unsuccessful expedition the preceding day led our poor dejected wanderer now to commence a different route. He had therefore a new map of his way to trace on his tablet; but in all his weary windings not one individual did he encounter, who would undertake to convey a letter to the English army: not one that could or would direct him where to find a magistrate, nor yield him a clew to any town, village, monastery, *quinta*,* *venta*,† or even a *badegan*.‡

At length the shades of evening were darkening into twilight; and Fauconberg, fa-

* Country-house or villa.

† Solitary inn.

‡ Pothouse.

tigued in mind and frame, had turned his weary footsteps homewards, assured that his alarming guest must have slept off by this time the effect of his soporific draught; and the safety of his friends now consequently filled him with anxiety and apprehension; and as his alarms for them acquired new strength, so seemed his footsteps to lose their lingering weariness; for they gradually assimilated with his impatience to reach home, and with rapid strides had led him to the base of the crag he had in a winding pathway to ascend to the hut, when, to his utter dismay, he heard three shots fired in the precise mode described by the intruder.

Onwards Fauconberg flew, in a state of consternation scarcely to be paralleled: he had no doubt his guest, renovated by sleep, had found power to arise; when taking advantage of his absence, and the probable slumbering of his companions, had given the fatal signal to his horde: but not a dozen paces more had he ascended, ere a new meander in the thickly wooded path, appalled him by the

view of two ruffians pausing on their way, as if irresolute.

Their aspect wore the dauntless front of wild ferocity; and their muscular formation proclaimed, that whatever atrocity their hearts might prompt, their arm could execute, and that contest with them must prove a fearful warfare. Their habiliments were not calculated to soften the impression of terror their countenances could scarcely fail of inspiring; for the covering of their heads seemed, by its fantastic form, to add the scowl of demons to their brow; and their bodies, clad chiefly in sheep-skin, seemed to betoken the savage cruelty of the untamed barbarian; whilst each provided with a musket and a long knife, and a girdle ranged round with pistols, displayed most conspicuously that arms were not wanting to perpetrate their deeds of horror.

“*Por vida de San Jago!** I swear it was our senor’s signal, and it issued from yon point, just above our heads,” exclaimed one,

* By the life of St. Jago.

of these ruffians, in a deep and hollow growl, sounding like the tramp of fearful omen.

“ *Mil gracias, camarada,** for your information,” responded the other, in a tone of daring jocularly — “ we can all swear to our senor’s double-barrelled alarum ; but sound always deceives you, *camarada*. That signal issued from the next crag. You know my ears are never at fault.”

“ Ay, so you say, *tuno !†* But, up I’ll go, deceived or not by sound,” growled out the first speaker.

Fauconberg clearly saw, that by stratagem only could he evade the impending peril, and send off these ferocious auxiliaries of the desperate man his hut so calamitously sheltered ; and, without hesitation, he fired three shots from his pistol and musket, exactly in unison with the late signal.

“ *Por vida del diablo* — we are deceived,”

* A thousand thanks, comrade.

† Cunning scoundrel.

exclaimed the men, as they rapidly faced about, when advancing furiously to Fauconberg, one of them vociferated:

“Why the d—l did you fire in that way?”

“And, why the d—l should I not?” returned Fauconberg, in Spanish also, whilst calmly reloading both gun and pistol — “a British officer, commanding a division on its march, may fire his signals for rallying his men around him, when and how he pleases.”

“British soldiers! O, *diablo!*” exclaimed both brigands in a breath; when, now in their turn alarmed, they tried the activity of their heels in a prompt retreat; and ere many moments elapsed, Albert beheld through a vista, commanding a defile rising from the opposite boundary of the glen, up to a mountain sheepwalk, the men still darting onward in their rapid flight.

His stratagem had therefore succeeded; the brigands, for the present at least, were prevented from discovering their chief; but to

accomplish this, which might only prove a transient respite, he had expended nearly one third of his whole stock of ammunition; and poor Albert returned to his companions, almost in despair.

On entering the hut, he found his own party in the greatest consternation; but the intruder, in apparent composure, calmly extended on his pallet.

“Signals,” Cameron said, “had been fired and answered, but a few moments since: the former so immediately at the exterior of the hut, that not a doubt could exist of some one having been there, if not still in ambush.”

“Were you not out, monsieur?” demanded Fauconberg, sternly.

“I, out! — *Diable d'enfer!* — I, out! I cannot rise. My wound — my sickness I should say, so much enfeebles me; I cannot even rise,” he replied, in tones betraying agitation.

“The approximate signals being responded

to," exclaimed Rosstrevor, " proves we are surrounded by banditti ; and I have not power to defend myself."

" Fear not *surrounding* objects," said Fauconberg, " our apprehensions have their base *within* ;" and now, with the wary Carlo for an auxiliary, he proceeded to examine the exterior ; but not a vestige of any human being having been there could he trace ; and after this anxious scrutiny, he re-entered the hut to distribute the fruit he had culled for the sick during his wandering of that day ; and to imbibe more alarm and perplexity relative to the mysterious signals ; for all assured him " monsieur had slept profoundly, until about half an hour prior to the first shots ; when, after appearing restless for some moments, he had fallen off into another deep slumber, from which the approximate signal had awakened him."

" And during his second slumber," said Rosstrevor, peevishly — " the rascal snored so confoundedly, I wonder Dermod had not

the consideration for me, to shoot off the odious nasal trumpet."

Rosstrevor, Cameron, and Dermod, now largely partook of Fauconberg's alarm; but not one of them yet knew the certain grounds he had for apprehension. They knew not that formidable ruffians had been not fifty yards from their asylum, in search of the identical assassin who had already aimed at the life of one of them, and whom their roof now sheltered; for now the suspicions of Fauconberg were confirmed by the *lapsus linguæ* of the hypocrite, who affected illness, no doubt, to account for his being disabled, as possibly he feared, that acknowledging his wound might lead him to the fangs of justice.

But yet, that the wretch could be wounded, and deprive himself of all chance of cure, appeared inexplicable to Fauconberg, who now imbibed a fear of the oppressive effluvia he exhaled, proceeding from his neglected wound, and that extensive mortification had already commenced.

Whilst this evident brigand occupied so much of Albert's thoughts, it was natural that he should monopolize much also of his ocular attention; and as, from time to time, he turned his wary glance upon him, he perceived his being restless to a pitiable degree, as if suffering excruciating tortures; which, with all his firmness, he laboured to conceal.

The milk of human kindness, which flowed abundantly through the heart of Fauconberg, now led him to pity even the wretch, whose own turpitude had caused the suffering he endured, and at length induced his saying —

“ You are in agonies from your wound, monsieur.”

“ Wound ! *Diable d'enfer !* Wound !! Who dares to say I am wounded ? ” exclaimed the brigand, starting up infuriated; but instantly awakening to the inspirations of prudence, he sank down again, and clouded his face with his arm, as if to conceal himself from the recognition of Cameron; who, on his part, made a strong effort to raise himself, as if attracted to such exertion by the transient

glimpse he had obtained of the intruder's horrid visage.

"You did yourself, monsieur," responded Fauconberg, "and deprive yourself, not only of ease, but of every possible chance of recovery, by endeavouring to conceal your real malady."

"And supposing I were wounded; who shall dare to wonder at an officer's being wounded in such an action as the last?" shouted out the brigand, fiercely.

"Certainly, no one can wonder how you came by your wound," returned Fauconberg, calmly; "but having come by it, I should imagine to get it cured would be your first aim. I am not Quixote enough in humanity, to offer you — stranger as you are to me, the services I perform for my friends; but as I perceive you able to start up when excited to the exertion, I will bring you every requisite for your affording yourself considerable relief."

"D — n your requisites, and you along with them! — *diable d'enfer*!" exclaimed the

now infuriated man—"I am not wounded; and beware of insulting me with even a suspicion of my being wounded."

"I have only your own testimony for what I asserted," returned Fauconberg; "but it is your affair, not mine. However, I would recommend your making all the arrangements in your power for your closing scene; since the inevitable consequence of your obstinacy, mortification—

"Mortification!—*Santa Maria—Madre de Dios*—mortification!!" reiterated the wretch, aghast; and through his terror forgetting his French, and now starting to a sitting posture, importuned the aid of Fauconberg, by every supplication the fear of death could inspire.

Fauconberg immediately supplied him with all he had promised, and the terrified brigand set about his task with all the energy of desperation; now regardless of displaying not only his face to view, but his evident pillage—a brilliant star, and other magnificent insignia of some foreign order, which were

suspended round his neck by a massy chain of gold.

“For mercy!” he exclaimed, in tones appalling to humanity — “look at my wound, and tell me if a mortification is indeed inevitable.”

Fauconberg did comply, and perceiving the wound did not wear the healthy appearance of his brother's and Cameron's, internally shuddered; but believing it judicious, now he had accomplished his object of removing somewhat of the noxious effluvium, not to drive him to desperation, which might yield him supernatural strength to rush out of the hut, and send forth his signal to summon his horde, gave him every hope, from the salutary operation he was now performing; and which did shortly evince its beneficial influence, so that the miscreant was soon convinced the prognostic of mortification would not be verified; yet still he languished for the comforts of his own rude dwelling — the aid of his own surgeon; and, above all, he lamented his detention from his *companeros*, because he

feared it might impede the execution of a diabolical plot which he had planned; and this fear made him still more impatient to return to his fortress. Being now, therefore, no longer under the influence of opium, sleep was completely banished from his pallet, and his senses all on the alert, to catch any sound which might bring him hope his band were still in anxious search for the place of his concealment.

The fatigue of Fauconberg was so evident, that Cameron saw, unless he were allowed the renovation of sleep, he must sink beneath his toil, anxieties, and abstinence, and therefore entreated Albert to stretch himself upon the rushes by his side.

“And I will keep guard,” said Cameron, “for whilst you were performing your vigil through last night, I often obtained the benefit of profound repose; I therefore shall feel no inclination to sleep, and now, knowing the importance of my watch, it is unlikely I should be found napping on my post.”

“Why then, the blessing of Heaven be the

sweet mantle of safety to your honour!" exclaimed Dermod, with affecting energy — "for my master dear requires rest, if ever the stag escaped from the hunters did; and no blame to him for that same. Myself will keep watch, wid your honour, as long as my eyes will be letting me; but sorrow wink did they wink towards sleeping, since that whistle, and bad manners to it, blew them open last night; and the whole blessed day they stud staring in regard to fearing harrum would harrum master Albert; and to listen for the welcome sound of his return. So, Mr. Cameron, your honour, if I drop off, and that sleep overtakes you on your watch, unknownct to you, I'd be entirely obliged to your honour to give me a call, and I'll be bail I'll waken up in a minute."

The exhausted state of poor Fauconberg, harassed both in mind and frame, led him to accede to his friend's kind proposition, and soon he lost all recollection of his cares in a profound repose; when Cameron, with hand on pistol, and eyes fixed upon the brigand, —

whom he had fully recognised, not only as the assassin he had wounded, but as an assassin of much more fatal portent to himself, proved a determined and a steady guard:

CHAPTER VII.

THE shrill notes of chanticleer awakened Fauconberg at the dawn of morning, to behold with regret the expiring ray of the precious moiety of their small store of candles. The crowing of a cock, again so distinctly heard, reanimated the almost dormant hopes of Fauconberg; for its being a domestic animal, left him not a doubt of the vicinity of some inhabited dwelling, yet undiscovered by him; and on the wings of this new-born hope he flew, to execute his numerous employments, ere he set out to seek the haunts of men; which the herald of the morning had two successive days proclaimed so near.

At length Fauconberg was ready to sally forth; but the necessity he felt of leaving a full share of arms and ammunition behind him, for the protection of his friends, pre-

sented the adventurous route he was commencing as one of formidable aspect; for were he to encounter those, whom by pardonable stratagem he had diverted from the prompt discovery of his hut, what would one pistol and his honour-consecrated steel, avail, against men so armed as they were for destructive warfare?

For the first time since his days of early childhood, Albert Fauconberg experienced the tremulous palpitation of apprehension. The too probable chance of being attacked by the irritated bravos, without the means of lengthened resistance, and the consequent fate of his helpless charge, made that heart sink, which in the fiercest heat of battle had never ceased to throb with the intrepid valour of a sterling-stamped hero; and every new meander he had to make, in his winding descent from the hut, would have produced the expectation of beholding the sanguinary ruffians his ruthless destiny had led him to deceive, had not the sportive Carlo, in his doubling pastime, been onward in the path to give, by

his ready note, the signal of any one's approach.

Albert had nearly made his lonely descent into the glen, without encountering aught to add to his alarms, when he observed a winding defile branching off from the path he trod, and which he instantly conceived not unlikely to be that he sought; and he had not proceeded far on this new track, when a stream opened to his view, and led him, with all the ingenuity privations will inspire, to plan, as he paced onward, a road, by which he might hope to obtain a supply of food, without the aid of ammunition, which he believed could not be spared from the protection of his little hospital.

The abode of chancicleer was at length discovered by the anxious Fauconberg. He found it a lonely habitation, sheltered from the eye of common observation by a thick grove of the algaroba, and where the babbling of full twenty rills, over rude channels of granite, in headlong descent, to mingle into the magnificence of a foaming cascade, that rushed down to the deepest ravine of this

chain of valley, prevented his hearing the herald of his approach, announcing to his mistress, in a shrill strain of barking, the hasty footsteps of a stranger; so that the cottage guard burst out upon him, ere he was aware a dwelling was so nigh.

The neatness of all the eye at one glance took in, led Fauconberg to cherish hope; for here he believed was civilization; and might he not expect to find, as its compeer, that benevolence which fellowship between man and man awakens and encourages?

Fauconberg entered the *casapuerta*,* and a gentle tap at the house door, by its courteous assurance that no bold intruder was there, drew instantly to his view a female peasant, attired in that style of costume which happily combines simplicity with the picturesque.

This peasant had made her near advance to the vale of years, and evidently through a path strewn more with the briars than the flowers of life; for the trace of many more

* Open porch.

years than she had numbered marked her brow, where melancholy sat with a most touching eloquence of expression.

With the natural, or rather the acquired sadness of this woman's fine countenance, was now strongly blended an evident tone of alarm; and in tremulous accents she pronounced:

“*Que quieres, amigo?*”*

“I am a total stranger in this part of Spain,” said Albert, courteously, “and am at a loss to find my way to the nearest town. Can you assist me?”

“The way, senor, from hence to —— is so intricate,” she replied, a little more composed in voice and manner, “that no direction could lead you thither.”

“Perhaps your husband, for a handsome remuneration, would undertake to be my guide?”

“Ah! senor, I am a lorn widow!”

* What do you want, friend?

“ Possibly you may have a son who would accompany me?”

“ Oh, *Santa Maria!*—Yes, I have a son ; but ——” she replied in faltering tones of strong emotion.

“ Not wounded, I hope, in the unfortunate warfare that disturbs your country?”

“ *O Madre de Dios,** that it were no worse than that!” responded the peasant, bursting into an agony of tears — “ O, no, senor, the only wound received is through the heart of his mother!”

The thrilling cadence which terminated this last sentence, so fully awakened the sympathy of a son who honoured and adored his mother, that Fauconberg’s look and simple “ Alas!” struck, in the melting tones of feeling, so promptly to the woman’s gratitude, that without further hesitation she requested him “ to rest awhile on the stone bench in her *casa-puerta.*”

* Mother of G—d.

Fauconberg acquiesced, with a view of inducing her to become laundress to his distressed garrison, or to obtain for his friends some aid in nourishment.

“ You are an English officer, I perceive, senor,” said the woman, now closing the door of her cottage, and seating herself on the bench opposite to him — “ I presume you are following your brave and humane army, which has, as I hear, pushed on to ——— .”

Fauconberg shuddered; for, were this intelligence of such a rapid advance true, there no longer existed for him any hope of succour from his brigade. The peasant proceeded —

“ You have a long way to travel, ere you come up with your *comarados*; and if alone, I tremble for you. Your road is full of dangers.”

“ Soldiers are ever well armed,” said Fauconberg, not satisfied at the cautious manner in which this woman shut her door, and threw her anxious glances in at the window of her cottage.

“ Armed !” repeated the woman, in a tone

of horror, as her face assumed a ghastly hue — “ Armed !! But you would not — no, you would not *kill* the wretch unfit to die, who asked you to deliver ? ” she added, in a tone of deep interest, sounding almost like that of earnest supplication.

“ Not unless I found cause to believe my own life in peril,” returned Fauconberg.

“ But even then,” responded the woman, with emotion almost convulsive — “ but even then :—— Yet would it not be better to avoid the danger of using arms on either side ? But, how came you in this wild place without your *comarados* ? ”

“ I came here to seek a friend, and am now, as I before intimated, in pursuit of a guide to conduct me to the nearest town.”

“ Let nothing tempt you, señor, to trust a guide you know not,” said the peasant, in an earnest tone. “ These dreadful wars have introduced mal-practices amongst a once harmless people, and perverted the principles of many a one, as well as my poor —— . But you — you seem so humane and courteous, I

would fain preserve you. Make the best of your way to a monastery, and the holy fathers will provide a guide, on whom you may rely."

"But I know not my way to any neighbouring monastery. Can you direct me where to find one?"

The woman, after a thoughtful pause, entered the cottage, saying, "she would inquire," leaving Fauconberg to counsel with his own thoughts.

There were circumstances in this woman's conduct, which awakened suspicion of her, whilst in respect to her connexions she had herself established conviction of their villany; but her countenance, her tones, and above all, her tears, were powerful advocates in her favour, and made it a question with Fauconberg, whether to obey his first impulse, and depart with speed; or remain, and place his trust in providence for the result of this inquiry.

But no time was allowed him for deliberation; the woman almost immediately returned,

and, in agitated tones, addressed him with impressive solemnity.

“ You are an Englishman, and I firmly believe you will not deceive a poor heart-wrung widow, who puts her trust in you. There is in my cottage a youth, whom I have pressing reasons to send with speed to a place of safety. His all of happiness depends upon his promptly reaching a neighbouring monastery, to which he well knows the way ; and he will be your faithful guide, if you will give him your protection.”

“ Is it your son ? ” demanded Albert in alarm, lest she was about to send a proscribed offender, under his escort, to a sacred sanctuary.

“ Oh no,” she replied, “ it is not my son, but one whom these arms have fostered ; and one whom I love as my own child. In this youth, senor, is to be found all that Heaven ever formed of goodness ; and to save him from those who would destroy his peace here, his bliss hereafter, I fain would send him to Santa Barbara’s.”

“ Then give him to my care,” said Fauconberg, with strong feeling, “ and if my arm can protect him, feel satisfied he shall in safety reach the sacred sanctuary.”

“ *Salud y pesetas a tigo!*” * exclaimed the peasant, with all the energy of enthusiastic gratitude; and rushing into her dwelling, soon reappeared, attended by a youth, who, with downcast eyes and tremulous steps, approached towards Fauconberg.

And never had Fauconberg beheld a being more prepossessing in aspect than this stripling, who seemed not more than fourteen years of age; his form was delicate almost to the indication of ill health, and his countenance,—though yet unenlivened by the glances of his eyes, and one cheek was blanched, the other flushed by agitation, — was sweet and interesting almost to fascination; and though clad in the homely attire of a peasant boy, the transcendent grace and elegance of his every movement, proclaimed him in disguise.

* Health and wealth to you.

The woman tenderly embraced and blessed the boy; and Fauconberg, from the spontaneous feeling of compassion, on viewing the fragility of the boy's frame, kindly took his bundle from him, and slung it over his shoulder on his musket.

“ You seem unequal yet to carry burdens,” said Fauconberg, with a sweet smile of benignity, as he performed this kindness; and the youth, surprised at the benevolence of the action, raised his eyes to look at his protector whilst he thanked him; and as a blush mantled his cheeks, Fauconberg mentally pronounced, that Ganymede had ne’er been borne to Olympus, to serve out nectar, had Jove beheld this youth, the refinement of whose tones, and the purity of whose language, as in a soft melodious voice he uttered his acknowledgments, confirmed the belief of Fauconberg, that the place of this young Spaniard was amid the highest order of society.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE first furlong of their way was paced by Fauconberg and his *protégé* in total silence, but with great rapidity; for the young Spaniard seemed to purpose, that his flight should not be merely such in name.

“You have not been accustomed, I perceive, senor, to long marches,” said Albert, at length, with a smile, “or you would not commence your day’s pedestrianism with such an exhausting quick step.”

“Pardon me, senor,” the boy responded: “the asylum to which we are now proceeding is scarcely more than one league from Marcella’s cottage; and, though my terror seems to have yielded me wings to effect my escape from peril, I will slacken my speed, lest I should fatigue my kind protector.”

“By no means,” returned Albert; “how-

ever rapidly you pursue your way, I promise to assimilate my speed to yours."

"Oh, Heaven be praised!" the boy exclaimed; "for such peril is impending over me, that, could you know its source, you would not wonder at my exertions to escape it. But you, with your English valour, will pronounce me a sad cowardly boy, when, on the approach of footsteps, I glide behind a clump of trees, to conceal myself from all whom we may chance to meet: but were I to be recognised by any of those who are making diligent search for me, my certain destruction must ensue; and, too probably, that also of my kind protector."

Again Fauconberg became suspicious of the integrity of his companion, notwithstanding all the fascinations of apparent innocence which he displayed.

"I thought Marcella — so, I think, you call her — said, you were not her son?"

"No, thank Heaven! I am not Marcella's son," returned the youth. "I am her nurs-

ling, senor; and, a short time since, the approach of the French barbarians to my place of residence, induced my protectors — alas! senor, I have no parents to protect me — to send me to the dwelling of Marcella; assured, that in so sequestered a spot I should remain in safety; not divining the direful peril that soon menaced me there; a peril, through which my communications with my friends were cruelly suspended; and flight, at length, has become my only resource to save me from destruction. The superior of the monastery I am flying to is my relative; and if I arrive there, I shall be afforded safe, though secret, escort to my guardian, who is, senor, my uncle.”

“ But why,” demanded Fauconberg, “ did your friends deem it expedient to send you into concealment, upon the approach of the French army?”

“ They feared,” he replied, with a little hesitation and a brilliant blush, “ that I might — might be compelled to take up arms; — and — and being so young, and consequently

not strong, they thought it better to avoid the measure.

“I fear thou art a sad dastard, if nothing worse,” thought Fauconberg; and on they again went some way in total silence; but at length this pause was broken by the Spaniard.

“I learned from Marcella, senor, that you wish for a guide to conduct you to ———, and there exists no doubt, but, at Santa Barbara’s, you can procure one in whom you may confide; for though the recluse of a cloister may nominally differ from you in faith, you will find their faith is truth, when they pledge it to those who confide in their honour.”

The feeling with which the youth uttered this, again banished suspicion from the mind of Fauconberg, and with rapidly increasing confidence and cordiality, he replied: “In truth, I stand in need of more than a guide from the good fathers of Santa Barbara; I require their benevolent offices for some wounded and sick friends.”

“Friends who are not in this neighbourhood, I trust,” returned the Spaniard anxiously;

“ for here neither you nor they can abide in safety : sadly, indeed, is this country changed. Not long since, the most lonely path was one of safety ; and, from being almost reared in this spot, I well remember how good the people used to be, until example taught them ferocity, and vanquished their reverence to their altars. Piety once banished, the baneful contagion had nothing to oppose it ; and as the French army, in their system of pillage, possessed themselves of great treasure, the concealing these about their persons induced other depredators, in their turn, and led plunderers to hover near the field of battle to spoil them ; and these vultures, who preyed on the dead or dying, thus led on to atrocity, were not slow in finding a chief, organizing them into a troop of desperate brigands, and becoming the terror of the whole province : and this neighbourhood unfortunately presenting this dreadful troop with the subterraneous ruins of a Moorish fortress for a strong hold, and many cavities in the surrounding rocks for temporary retreat, all have combined to transform this

once peaceful valley into a rendezvous of banditti."

The poor youth had so worked upon his own feelings of apprehension by this recital, that now he shook with terror, and drew nearer to his protector than he had before ventured to attempt.

"But does this formidable chief continue his exploits, whilst the contending armies are so near him?" demanded Albert, who now firmly believed he knew this leader more intimately than was compatible with safety.

"No," returned the boy, in the now evidently lowered tones of new-born caution; "for he has been wounded lately by an English officer, and — Oh, *Santa Maria!* I hope it was not by you, senor?"

"No, it was not by me," Albert responded.

"How I rejoice to hear that, as the whole desperate troop have sworn the most vindictive fury against the poor officer; whose pistol, bearing his name, having unfortunately fallen into their hands, they have determined to trace him by that means, and gratify their vengeance."

Fauconberg shuddered at the menaced safety of his friend, and eagerly inquired, "where was the wounded chief?"

"His horde know not, although in anxious search for him. He mysteriously disappeared from a cottage, where he had been laid, as a spot of temporary rest, whilst two of his people went for a litter to convey him to his fortress: these bandits, through some causes arising from their malpractices, were compelled to change their route from the fortress with the litter to the cottage; and in that circuitous path coming within the range of the English army, they were forced to hide by day in the woods, and during the delay thus occasioned, their leader disappeared.

"But," demanded Fauconberg, anxious to obtain all possible information from this most communicative youth, who seemed unconscious of how much he was implicating himself by this display of knowledge; "how do these brigands elude the fangs of justice?"

"Oh, senor, by that question, you know not how indulgent are the Spanish laws, where

there is gold to purchase the merciful forbearance of *alguazil mayors** and *osidores*." †

Fauconberg again shuddered, for now every hope of aid from the magistracy of the nearest town was overthrown.

At this moment they arrived at an intersecting path, and the youth's terror became still more conspicuous.

"This way, senor, and run; if you prize existence, run!" he almost wildly, though lowly articulated.

Fauconberg did run with his companion; but the moment the youth began to slacken his speed, through the exhaustion of his breath, he demanded "the cause of such an increase of alarm; since neither he, nor his dog, had observed any cause for apprehension?"

"No, thank Heaven! for had you, the observation must have been mutual; and your fate and mine must have been fatally decided. The path I fled from leads directly to the fortress of the brigands."

* High constables.

† Civil judges.

“ But how, may I ask, came you to be so well informed upon this subject?”

“ Ah! but for you, I should most probably have become too fatally acquainted, not only with their haunts, but with their atrocities,” replied the youth, with almost convulsive agitation. “ Two thirds of my life I have passed in this now alarming neighbourhood: no wonder, then, that I should know the site of every habitation. In the *quinta* of my guardian, which stood close to the fortress of the banditti, but which the ruthless brigands dilapidated, I passed my hours of recreation; and in the monastery of Santa Barbara was chiefly educated.”

“ By your being educated in a monastery, you are probably intended for the cowl?” said Albert, rejoiced to seize upon any extenuation for this interesting youth’s flying at the approach of warfare; and not remaining to give his aid, feeble as it might be, in his country’s preservation.

“ Why, no, senor,” replied the boy, as a deep blush mantled his cheeks, and something

like a playful smile hovered round his lips ;
“ I have no predilection for a monastic life.”

A bell tolling heavily now struck upon the ear of Fauconberg, announcing that they were not far from the haven they were seeking.

“ The sound of that bell now strikes on my heart like the voice of a friend,” said the youth ; “ though I did not pronounce it as such, when, in the dead of night, it aroused me from the tranquil sleep of health and innocence.”

They now had reached the base of a high and perpendicular rock ; and the boy, devoutly sinking on his knees, uttered a short but fervent thanksgiving, for having reached the haven of his security ; and then, as he arose, taking a key from his sash, he unlocked a massive door, and bid Fauconberg follow him. Fauconberg did so ; but the moment he found the door locked upon him, and himself at the foot of a staircase, rudely hewn out of the rock, a sensation of powerful alarm pervaded his whole frame.

“ Were it possible, this youth, apparently

so ingenuous and devout, had wiled him into a fortress of banditti?"

At the moment this appalling suggestion passed through Albert's mind, the youth pulled a rope, when a bell sounding out tones of horror on Albert's ear, he impetuously exclaimed: — "In the name of truth and honour, whither are you conducting me?"

The evident terrors of the youth had all by this time vanished; and now with animation he turned his eyes, beaming the brilliancy of surpassing beauty, mingled with a little tone of archness, upon Fauconberg, as he answered—

"To nothing more alarming, senior, than the monastery of Santa Barbara. This ascent leads to the interior of the convent. The grand entrance is about half a league further on, in the now depopulated town of ————. These rude stairs were hewn for the accommodation of pilgrims, who used to throng hither to visit the relics the convent church contained; and the great fatigue inflicted by mounting so many hundred steep and narrow steps, formed a principal part of the penance here performed.

“ Here,” continued the youth, “ is the first of many grates, which were erected to prevent the possible escape of votaries who had as little predilection for the *cowl* as myself. They are still kept locked to exclude invaders, but my key uncloses all.”

“ Am I wise, thus implicitly to intrust myself with this boy?” thought Fauconberg, and suddenly seizing him by both hands, he said—

“ Let me read in your countenance, ere I proceed with you, if you are deceiving me. Look up at me, sir!”

The boy did not look up at him; his eyes sought the ground; the brightest blushes glowed upon his cheeks, and he shook with agitation: but, although tremulous were the tones in which he spoke, they did not sound to the ears of Albert like those of guilt, as, presenting the key, he answered—

“ Take this for your security. I shall be then in *your* power. Or,” continued the youth, in bolder accents, taking from his bosom the most hallowed emblem of his religion, “ receive this, as a sacred pledge I dare not but redeem.”

Fauconberg took with reverence the hal-
lowed pledge into his hands; and though in
heart only was his worship performed, he
viewed the sacred symbol of another's faith
with the veneration it was calculated to inspire;
and in full conviction that it could not be thus
profaned, as the mask of a deceiver, he in-
stantly returned it with the key, and said—

“With confidence will I follow you.”

And he did follow him up the steps, which
were hewn out of the granite, so as to leave a
parapet, or rather a screen, which not only
acted as a security from accident, but a con-
cealment from observation for those who
passed along; and through many a chasm in
this rude bulwark Fauconberg beheld the coun-
try below; and, in a pause his young guide
made to recover breath, he desired Albert to
look down on the ruins of an extensive ha-
bitation.

“That was,” he said, “not long since, the
beautiful *quinta* of my uncle; and just above
it you now see the ruin of the Moòrish tower,
beneath which is to be found the subterraneous

fortress of the banditti ; and now, knowing the path that leads to it, and its very site, beware how you approach it.”

At length they gained the summit of their long ascent, when the Gothic turrets of an ancient monastery burst on the view of Fauconberg, in all the solemn grandeur of an edifice formed of black and white granite, hewn out of the solid body of the rock which composed the base as well as fabric ; and, whilst a sudden chill crept over his frame, Albert acknowledged to himself that the exterior bore too formidable a mould to be approached by him with sensations of composure.

“ Again I toll the monastic bell,” said the youth, whilst a smile, playing round his dimpled mouth, displayed his teeth like rows of pearl in coral mounting. “ So, call up, I conjure you, every particle of your British valour, to prevent your flying in dismay from the formidable personages—my peal will summon to appear. But courage, senor ! I pledge myself they will not take you captive.”

And now to the deep-toned sound of

massy chains and grating hinges, an iron-plated gate unclosed, to discover to the amazed Fauconberg, neither armed brigand, nor cowed monk, but an old and decrepit lay-sister of a convent of nuns.

“The holy saints have heard our prayers, and sent you to us!” exclaimed this portress, when instantly the young Spaniard and his companion were admitted within the quadrangle of a nunnery.

One of the professed sisters of the community now rushed forward, and, catching the youth to her bosom, clasped him there with tender energy.

“Bravo!” mentally ejaculated the young soldier, “I wonder if I am to be so treated?” but no wish did he breathe for such a distinction; the form and gait of this recluse proclaimed her old and infirm.

The boy seemed to Fauconberg to submit to the embrace with wondrous fortitude; but he quickly receded from it, and turning to the lay-sister, said—

“Good Ursula, conduct this stranger to the

parlour. "Senor, you shall hear from me, and by one who has more power to serve you than I possess."

"But, shall I not see you too?" exclaimed Fauconberg, in a tone of deep anxiety.

"Not immediately," responded the youth, with a brilliant glow of cheek, and in a soft accent expressive of regret; "but rest assured, my kind and brave protector shall not find cause to condemn me for ingratitude."

The agitated boy now presented his tremulous hand to Fauconberg as he uttered his *adios!* then hastened away with the affectionate nun through a door into a cloister; and the lay-sister, Ursula, courteously conducted Fauconberg to the parlour of the superior.

"What an unthought-of adventure!" said Albert now to himself; "and not bearing the most pleasing aspect in the world of casualties, unless, indeed, a lovely young novice were to appear from behind that execrable barrier yonder, to implore my knight-errantry in freeing her 'from durance so vilely vile.'"

CHAPTER IX.

IN the present state of Albert's mind, trembling with apprehension for the safety of his helpless friends, and by no means secure as to his own, it may be readily imagined he considered each moment an age, till his suspense should be terminated, relative to the benefit which he was to derive from this introduction to a community of nuns.

In this gloomy apartment there was nothing to engage attention, except the miserable supply of furniture it contained, and which was of such a kind as to lead to a belief, in the mind of the now impatient occupant, that none of the treasures imputed to the conventual recluse had fallen to the share of this community.

Fauconberg had paced, with rapid strides, this cheerless parlour some scores of turns; had examined his watch a dozen times; had

as frequently rebuked the fretful whine of the half alarmed Carlo ; had mentally accused the young Spaniard of unkindness at least, if not ingratitude, for thus forsaking him ; had conjectured every likely and unlikely consequence of his visit to Santa Barbara's ; had smiled repeatedly at the playful assurances of his young companion, that those he was conducting him to would not take him captive, ere he heard the sound of an approaching individual.

The sound issued from an opening door, not within the grate, as Fauconberg expected, but in the part of the room which he occupied, and the finest female figure he had ever beheld entered, with a step of dignity he had never seen surpassed, and with an air of majesty he had never seen equalled.

For one moment the heart of the young soldier bounded with the idea of romantic love, but the next that fluttering sensation vanished ; for the dress this lady wore, though differing in some points from that of the ancient sister he had seen, was still conventual.

“ Alas ! ” sighed Fauconberg, “ and could

it please Heaven to have this surpassing work thus sacrificed?"

And still this alas was echoed through his bosom, even after the superior of the convent had raised her veil to address him; for this lady was the abbess herself, and gave to his view a wreck of beauty, which, in its prime, had been indeed transcendent: but though it was now a ruin, it was like the ruin of some grand, some exquisitely wrought pile, which still attracts, and yields a melancholy delight to the eye of the admiring beholder.

"Stranger, be seated," said the abbess.

With the profound bow of obedient veneration, Fauconberg instantly obeyed; for her mandate, though delivered in the tones of the most captivating sweetness, possessed a magic power, which seemed to say, "My will shall become thine!"

"I am here," said the abbess, in a voice that premature old age and affliction had not found power to despoil of its fascinating sweetness; for the former only seemed to have rendered it more persuasive by its gentle fal-

tering, the latter more touching in the interest it awakened. "I am here, senor, as ambassador from my young relative, whom you have rescued from a direful fate, to present you *her* most grateful thanks. Your start, senor, and the eloquent expression of your countenance, inform me how infinite is your astonishment at my utterance of a pronoun you did not expect to hear coupled with your late companion; and that astonishment you experience will convey balm to the sensitive delicacy of your late *protégée*, in the conviction, that she had not betrayed herself. And this your grateful *protégée* trusts, you will forgive her employing a substitute to convey her thanks to you; for the dire and absolute necessity for appearing in male attire being past, she could not voluntarily see you whilst in that garb. And, in a situation similar to hers, she feels assured you would wish your own sisters to act, however ungraciously it might appear, as she has done."

"And I feel assured," Fauconberg replied, with all the courteous grace of polished

manners, "that it will ever be my wish for my sisters to act, in every instance, like your young friend, senora. But," he added, in an anxious tone, "am I never to have the honour of seeing her again?"

"At present, most certainly not," replied the abbess; "but she commissioned me to tell you, 'that her disappointment will be severe, if at some future and more auspicious period, she is not permitted the power of herself thanking you for the important service you have rendered her.'"

"I am, as my garb informs you, a soldier, madam; and, whilst employed in the active service of a moving army, I cannot command my time; but if honoured with the address of this young lady, who is as prudent as she is fair, the very moment fate permits, I will wait upon her, not to receive her thanks for what in fact was an interested service, but to apologize for rough conduct and suspicions, which could not have failed to alarm and distress her gentle spirit."

"Should you, in the successes of your glo-

rious army, visit Madrid, inquire at the banker, Senor Felix ———, in the street of Alcala, for Alvina; and he will either conduct you to her at her guardian's, or give you her address."

"For Alvina, simply?" Fauconberg anxiously demanded.

"Simply for Alvina," replied the abbess, "who has informed me that her gallant preserver is in quest of aid, which she has promised him in my name. Alas! poor child! that promise sprang from her recollection of the power I lately possessed to serve, but she wholly forgot that that power has been wrested from me."

"This convent," continued the abbess, after a little pause, which had evidently been one of struggle for composure; "this convent, not long since, was the richest in this province. The treasures of our church were the attraction of the pious, the admiration of the curious. The duties of charity had ample resources; and the peace, which even our wealth could not purchase, rested within our walls: but our hallowed sanctuary was assailed; our gates

burst open by a sacrilegious invader; our monastery sacked, and left, as you behold it, a monument of that desolation which the crimes of our invaders have widely spread in the destructive torrent of their overwhelming passage; whilst I, the bereaved superior, am spared, ungraciously to tell the individual, to whom my gratitude is deeply debtor, that I cannot yield him succour:" and tears now trickled down the quivering cheeks of the agitated abbess, which not even the burning blushes of shame, at the painful necessity she found of uttering so apparently ungrateful a declaration, had power to dry.

"But that," she at length said, ere the bitterly disappointed Fauconberg could articulate the nature of the aid which he required; "but that rapacity in plunder fades into the mere shadow of enormity, when compared with the sacrilegious crimes which formed its accompaniment. Our holy sisterhood immolated by the sword of dire barbarity, or torn from their sacred sanctuary by the ruthless grasp of

violence; yes, even our sweetest flowers; but flowers and weeds were alike swept off by the fell blast that desolated Santa Barbara. I could not rescue those, who, with wildest shrieks, cried out to me for succour. Even now, those shrieks vibrating in my ear, seem to upbraid me for the life I hold: but I was born for braving misery! No grief, no horror sends me from a world that only measured out dire woes for me. I spun my own web of misery, and it is meet and right the lengthened thread should be drawn to augment my sufferings. But in the fatal hour that desolated this community, the Almighty permitted my sending off my Alvina to a spot of temporary security. I then fled from refuge to refuge, praying and imploring, but in vain, for others as I fled; until, with three sisters, I plunged into the secret dungeons of our monastery; dungeons which in ages past were formed for barbarous purposes; and now, in our more enlightened times, I fled to them from barbarous deeds; and there, with the companions of my des-

perate refuge, braved the lingering death of famine : but the All-wise willed to three of us extended life.

“ By the decree of Providence, our diabolical assassins, our atrocious——but Heaven pardon my presumption ! Reviling ill becomes the sinful creatures of this world ! By the ordination of the All-merciful, our invaders were discomfited in the field of battle by our brave and humane allies. The pitiless spoilers fled from this spot which they had desolated ; and three of us crept from our dungeons, the literal skeleton of our late numerous community. We have survived, senor ; but we have survived our companions, our friends, our means even of subsistence.”

The poor abbess now ceased ; and in her pause, overcome by the torturing pangs of retrospection, looked like a statue erected there to personify that desolation which barbarity had made.

“ Not the means of subsistence, I hope, I trust,” Fauconberg exclaimed, in shuddering commiseration — “ oh, say not that, for there

I cannot aid you : and, and the senora Alvina, what then will become of her ?”

“ For Alvina, dear child,” replied the agitated abbess, making a touching effort to regain her firmness, “ I momentarily expect a safe escort, to convey her to a more secure asylum than either Marcella’s cottage or this desolated monastery now can prove ; for, alas ! the chief of a terrible banditti, which has lately established its principal haunts in this neighbourhood, having calamitously discovered her retreat with Marcella, and impelled by deadly enmity to the family from which she sprung”—Here the agitation of the abbess rendered her almost inarticulate, whilst either anticipated or past horrors blanched her cheeks to a more death-like paleness — “ has decreed her for the prize of his lieutenant, Vasquez ; a blot on human nature, almost as black, as diabolical, as the chief himself, Ramirez.

“ This dreadful, secret plot against our dear, our innocent child, the dismayed Marcella discovered through the medium of an unfortunate relative, who has fatally become too

well versed in the arrangements of the banditti; and to escape from this dire peril, which menaced her at Marcella's cottage, impelled the prompt and desperate decision of my poor Alvina, to throw herself upon the protection of an utter stranger: but that stranger was a man of honour, and the result has been most fortunate."

Fauconberg, actuated by deep interest for his lovely *protégée*, and by powerful sympathy for the unfortunate and prepossessing abbess herself, ventured to ask as many questions, relative to their present situation, as urbanity could sanction; and, from the ingenuous answers he received, he learned that the poor survivors of the convent of Santa Barbara were indebted for their present daily supply of food to a *Beata**, belonging to a community, which, happily residing out of the range of the devastating army of France, had still the power of exercising the active benevolence which characterized that order; that, through her kind

* An order of nuns who live out of convents, and mix with the world, doing good.

offices, their deplorable case had been represented to the bishop of their diocese; and that, through her agency, she hoped the final escape of Alvina from the province would be effected.

“And through this, our kind benefactress,” continued the abbess, “I cherish hope of being serviceable to the gallant preserver of my poor child.”

This intended kindness, by its effect upon the grateful feelings of our young soldier, led him at once to a full disclosure of the nature of those difficulties by which he was encompassed; and whilst in this, his unreserved confidence, he awakened in the bosom of the lady abbess every sympathy for the unfortunate situation of himself and friends; he excited, too, the most lively sensations of horror, on finding he had the calamity of sheltering at the same moment the wounded chief of a most formidable banditti, and the very individual who had inflicted that wound.

“Your case, alas! is almost without hope,” said the abbess. “As a last resource, you

might have hazarded the desperate chance of finding honour amongst thieves, and, by drawing on the gratitude of the band for your care and shelter of their chief, have led to their removal of your dangerous guest, without molesting your helpless charge; but, as the case now stands, such a measure would at once lead to your destruction, from the thirst for vengeance on your friend."

"Alas! alas! I am indeed bereaved!" she continued; "for I have no longer at my command the sage counsel and ready aid of a convent of monks of our order, who, for many a year, performed the duties of their profession with zeal and piety in the town of ———, at the base of the rock on which this monastery stands. Their sacred sanctuary, too, was assailed, and pillage and murder ——— Oh, senor, not one hoary head, I fear, was spared! Thus, in all things destitute, I have no effectual aid to offer you, except by daily supplication to Heaven, to pay our debt of gratitude to you and your brave nation, and in a trifling

supply of food and of essential comforts for your sick and wounded. And further, I have just recollected something which may prove of service to you. It is a small supply of ammunition, found by us in our anxious search for our property. It still remains where we discovered it."

Fauconberg, feeling any thing but reluctance at receiving what the holy nuns naturally recoiled from, thankfully took possession of this offered prize, which contained about a dozen cartridges and a small portion of powder and shot. The lint and bandages for wounds, which the convent charity had had in its stores, and of which the invaders had left behind them a small quantity, he also received with gratitude; but not till convinced by the strong assurances of the abbess, "of her expecting that very day a fresh supply from the benevolent *Beata*," would he consent to deprive her of the moiety of chocolate, rice, and sugar, she so generously offered.

The never dormant apprehension of Fau-

conberg for the safety of the helpless tenants of his hut, led him now, in anxiety for them, to think of terminating his visit.

“ I fear, senora,” said he, after he had intimated to this most interesting unfortunate the necessity he felt for returning to his helpless charge ; “ I fear the distance from my perilous quarters to Santa Barbara is too replete with danger to those I left unguarded, for me to repeat my visit here, until a more auspicious season ; yet, madam, I shall find my anxiety a painful feeling, to learn if the further escape of my late precious charge has been happily effected, and if your diocesan has been prompt in the performance of his duties here.”

“ *Ah ! hijo mio** ! you must not come hither more. That pity which leads you hence, must keep you from returning,” said the abbess, now in a subdued voice, as she beamed a look upon Fauconberg, so full of wo, that it made the tear of sympathy to glisten

* My son.

in his eye, and led him to fear she knew more of the perils of his fate than he anticipated.

“ But some communication I must devise, to evince my gratitude to the preserver of my poor Alviná,” continued the abbess, after an evident struggle of fortitude with feeling permitted her to proceed. “ Your garb, senor, is one of peril. Believe me, I do not purpose to cloud the glory it emits, nor,” she added, with a touching effort at a smile, “ to throw the cloke of religion over you as that of hypocrisy. Although it is for a deceptious purpose, I wish to clothe you in a pilgrim’s habit, which will prove a shield more invulnerable than even British valour, should you again meet those of the horde, whom your self-possession diverted from the discovery of their chief’s asylum ; because the pilgrim’s weeds, which our spoilers left behind them here, belong to an order of palmers, who make a mendicant passage from shrine to shrine. The poverty, therefore, which it implies, will guard you from every attack of the rapacious ; whilst its form will completely disguise you, and conceal your

military appendages. In this disguise, I would indeed advise your henceforth making your excursions in quest of food ; in which, by tomorrow, I greatly hope, through my kind benefactress, to be able myself to aid you ; and my little supplies I purpose, through her agency, to have deposited about midway between this monastery, and your chain of crags, in the *ermita*,* which you may have observed on a pinnacle of rock, overhanging the most precipitous descent of the valley."

" I have observed it," Fauconberg replied ; " and had I been in its neighbourhood under happier auspices, I would have visited it, to view the wide extent of prospect it commands."

" You may wonder," said the abbess, " why I select a spot which presents itself to observation from every point in the winding of the valley ; but the basis of its security for you firmly rests on the superstitious apprehensions of the banditti ; and further, it may excite

* Small chapel.

your wonder, how any sensation like awful dread can operate on individuals, who, in all their practices, so daringly brave that Being, whom in this solitary instance they seem to fear! It so happened, an awful visitation defeated the scheme of two of the banditti, to rob a priest whom they followed up to the *ermita* for that purpose. Fortunately for my intention, the horde believe it was the priest's patron Saint who inflicted this punishment for a sacrilegious project: and from that day, so singularly fatal to this daring band, the *ermita* has been as sacred from their incursion, as even the courts of the Holy Inquisition.

"The hour for your most probable security from the horde, when making your necessary excursions," continued the abbess, "will be at noon, when, as I have learned from poor Marcella, the horde retire to repose, whilst travellers generally lie by, to take also their *siesta*."

The pilgrim's habit was now brought forth by the lay sister, Ursula, when the handsome

Fauconberg was soon lost to recognition beneath its ample folds : his military accoutrements ingeniously arranged, to escape the penetrating eye of observation. A scrip superseded his havre-sac, and his scrippage furnished by the grateful and benevolent abbess ; “ who would have given more, but that her hand lacked means ” — and after she had fully instructed him how he was to beguile suspicion, by the language he was to hold in concordance with his garb, and given him her affecting blessing, in tones that vibrated on every susceptible feeling of his grateful heart, she precipitately quitted the apartment, leaving Fauconberg to be conducted by the aged Ursula, a very different companion from the lovely being who had led him to that monastery ; and, as he parted from his venerable escort, he with difficulty prevailed upon her to accept a recompense for all the trouble he had caused her ; but no entreaty could have effected the generous purpose of the grateful Fauconberg, had not a sudden hope presented itself to poor Ursula, “ that by its means she

might, through the agency of the kind *Beata*, procure a blanket for the poor sister Lucetta, who had nearly lost the use of her limbs by the damps in the asylum of their desperation."

"Alas!" sighed Fauconberg, as he parted from the poor lay sister, "that my cruel destiny should have thus led me to diminish the scanty stores of these unfortunates! But I will dedicate the powder and shot with which they have supplied me solely to their use; and can by that means exchange gifts with them on my visits to the *ermita*.—And is the lovely Alvina too — she who does not more resemble my countrywomen in transcendent beauty, than in the pure delicacy of her mind — is she too doomed to endure all the dire privations of this distressed and defenceless monastery!"

CHAPTER X.

FROM the painful sympathy of his profound meditations, Fauconberg was aroused by the sudden bark and springing forward of Carlo, who had been measuring his mazy rounds, and had only just returned to his master; when he thus disturbed a man, who from ambush had been scanning the figure of Fauconberg, with intensity of gaze determined on developement, as our young adventurer pensively advanced, lost to every remembrance of the perils by which he himself was surrounded.

The countenance of this keen observer wore the stamp of youth with that of honesty; but to this latter indication his eye presented a direct contradiction; for it was the array which, in the undisguised daring faulty-laws and venal magistrates had engendered, pro-

claimed the profession of which he was a member.

Fauconberg was aroused from his deep musing, to observe the brigand and his own danger at the same moment; when instantly recalling Carlo by a whistle, he then gave courteous utterance to the appropriate salutation, in which he had been schooled by the interesting recluse, to which the brigand responded in terms of unison, but in a tone which startled Fauconberg, and sent his hand into his bosom to grasp the pistol in concealment there; for the tone struck his ear like that of mock reverence.

“Health and wealth to you!” now exclaimed the bandit, with a passing bow of apparent courtesy; and after proceeding a few paces in retreat from Albert, he wheeled about, and through the intervention of a clump of trees, suddenly came upon him, uttering in a lowered voice like that of caution —

“Was there no pilgrim’s habit for your

dog? Beware of him! You are but half concealed!" and ere the amazed and dismayed Fauconberg had time to determine his most judicious mode of answering, the speaker of these warning words had disappeared."

"So then," said Fauconberg — "I am betrayed to this bandit, and the doom of my helpless companions is sealed. Oh, that I had never rescued my poor brother from impending burial, nor poor Dermot from his peril; for death had then been light in suffering to that which now awaits them; whilst Cameron, ill fated Cameron, what tortures will be inflicted on you by these vindictive monsters!"

And now, in all the horror which the dire anticipations of his dismayed imagination could inspire, Albert ran onward, with the speed of wild anxiety, to yield, as long as life was spared to him, protection to those who had no earthly shield but him, and whilst he ran, thought was as active as his frame; and conjecture followed conjecture, of whom this

well-informed brigand could be, and by whom he himself could have been betrayed; for of the sincerity of the sisters of Santa Barbara, he felt as profanation to admit a doubt.

But at length a suggestion arose to yield him a faint ray of consolation, and which his first feelings of alarm had veiled from his consideration — “that however alarming the recognition had proved, it had been acknowledged in the form of friendly warning; and how or by what person interested for him, the fact spoke as if his safety were the bandit’s object.”

And now, aspirating a wish from the bottom of his heart that poor Carlo had remained with the brigade, Fauconberg rushed down the almost precipitous woodland path, and with headlong speed reached an angle, where stood, in the shelter of a clump of cork trees, the identical brigands he had by stratagem beguiled.

“What, *tuno!*” exclaimed the man of jocularity, “are you running off your sins?”

or, are you running after them? *Por vida de San Jago*, pilgrim! but you may pass for a flying *diablo*, with news from your own regions. But come, let us see with what sort of material this scrip of yours is lined. You mendicant gentry contrive to find the prime tit morsels in every nook of charity."

"What the *diablo*, are you deaf and dumb?" growled out the most demoniac in aspect of the two—"that you can neither answer civil questions, nor turn your scrip commodiously for our scrutiny."

The situation of Fauconberg at this moment was not only one replete with danger, but of infinite perplexity. To speak, was to consign himself to instant destruction; and were he to persevere in silence whilst they rifled his scrip, it was unlikely they could credit his being actually deaf and dumb, though through insolence it had been suggested. To act upon the defensive was impracticable, since his disguise impeded his use of any weapon, save that concealed in his bosom; and were he in silent acquiescence to

submit to this inspection, it was to be expected that their sense of feeling would lead to the detection of the nature of the garb beneath the pilgrim's habit, even did their rapacity not propel a more diligent scrutiny.

In this moment of menaced peril, when every resource had seemed to fail poor Albert, Carlo, suddenly emerging from a thicket, set up a most appalling howl : instantly the robbers, in dismay, sprang out of his way, and in their panic forgetting the ready means in their own hands of effective rescue from the supposed peril, converted their long guns into leaping poles, and bounded across the stream, which rushed from concealment into full view, immediately at the point where they had stood ; and with their utmost speed scrambled to the mountain's brow and disappeared.

The same belief which had caused the rapid retreat of the brigands, for one painful moment possessed the mind of Albert too ; so strikingly had a sudden view of the water appeared the cause of Carlo's alarming howl : but quickly the piteous look of the poor animal, as he

raised his paw in supplication to his master to ease him of his pain, at once banished the horrible idea of hydrophobia ; when the barbed thorn, which had deeply entered his foot for so providential a purpose, was promptly extracted by Albert, who, piously breathing his gratitude to Heaven for this signal deliverance from impending peril, bound the wanderer to his side by means of his handkerchief, and then struck out of the regular pathway into the intricacies of the valley's wooded boundary, on the side opposite to that the robbers had retired by ; and, taking the *ermita* for his leading star, he at length guided his way to the exterior of his hut, where, weary and exhausted, he paused a few moments to disencumber himself from his disguise, and to conceal it from the observation of Ramirez ; from whose vindictive spirit he augured possible mischief to the helpless sisters of Santa Barbara, should he by any means trace his friendly intercourse with the inhabitants of that desolated monastery.

But his having derived aid, and from no

common source, was soon unavoidably revealed to Ramirez, by the fruit with which the prolific gardens of Santa Barbara, recovering from the plunderer's unsparing hand, permitted the abbess bountifully to supply his scrip; and, although the atrocious bandit gladly partook of the benefit so humanely shared with him, it augmented his wild impatience to regain, by extrication from his present miserable asylum, the indulgence of all the luxuries which his own haunts afforded; and after some moments' commune with his thoughts, he addressed Fauconberg in the servile tones assumed by hypocrisy to beguile.

"That my noble and benevolent protector has been led, by the mercy of pitying Heaven, into the blessed haunts of men, I perceive by the nature of the supplies he has providentially brought us; and thus led to brightened expectations, I am encouraged to take the liberty of asking my kind host, if he cherishes any hope of obtaining chirurgical assistance?"

"None whatever, senor," responded Albert,

fully aware that he was manœuvring for information to shape his own sinister designs.

“Then may I be permitted, most benign senor, to suggest a plan which may probably lead a surgeon of the highest repute in Spain hither? But ere I proceed, most benevolent sir, I will just observe, my anxiety is not awakened upon my own account, but for my fellow sufferers; as the impatient senor has become so still and meek, I fear nature is exhausting rapidly, and will soon prove too weak for the struggle, if he has not proper assistance; whilst, on the other hand, the senor, who evinced such godlike fortitude hitherto, has been, through the hours of my dear humane and noble protector’s long absence of this day, so pitiably restless, and has heaved such groans of affecting heartfelt anguish, that my susceptible heart has bled in sympathy, not doubting that his wounds have assumed some menacing change, requiring all the relief professional skill can yield: I, therefore, importune you, by all the blessed saints who now look down upon us, to take pity on these

sufferers, and adopt the project of my noble benefactor's most devoted slave."

Fauconberg, well divining the cause of his brother's fortitude, imbibed from this account no increase of alarm for him; whilst for Cameron it called up every fear; and, flying to this patient sufferer, demanded the cause of this unusual restlessness?

"My friend, fear not for my bodily ailment," Cameron replied, with strong emotion: "my mental ills are those which are incurable. Something in my present situation has awakened bitter retrospections; but, rely on me, I soon will resume my firmness."

Fauconberg sighed in sympathy for poor Cameron; and then, giving back his attention to Ramirez, said:—

"How can you lead me to procure this professional aid for my friends, senor?"

"I have observed writing materials amongst your stores; you can, therefore, allow me to compose a sort of placard for my kind and noble protector, to place on the monumental cross, which stands eastward of this crag.

Felix Pelago, the famous surgeon, whom I wish to draw hither, in his widely extended practice, daily passes through the valley. So at least the peasants, who turned the poor sufferer from their inhospitable dwelling, to find a haven in this bower of benevolence, informed me; for I had no other means — none under Heaven, as the saints above can testify, of knowing aught of this celebrated surgeon.”

Whose mode of practice, Fauconberg strongly suspected, would not be that of healing: however, the inspirations of prudence were, “to seem devoid of suspicion;” and, under her influence, he requested to know —

“By what means the placard could be affixed to the stone cross? and how the Senor Felix was to be guided to their hut?”

“You will find hooks affixed for the very purpose; at least it is probable; for, for — for in many parts of Spain, directions are so left for carriers: and as to my protector’s other most judicious query, I can state, ‘that the valiant conquerors of my degraded country, of my poor France, whom from being wounded,

require his care, have found their temporary hospital in the fifth crag from the northern angle of the mountain.”

“Well did you mark your way hither, senor; and for a stranger, wounded, in great suffering, and whilst bearing by savage monsters to you knew not what destination, you evinced a wondrous portion of fortitude,” remarked Albert, drily.

“My protector must think,” returned Ramirez, “that in a moment of apprehended treachery like that, it was most natural I should accurately note the road my inhuman bearers trod.”

“Well, senor,” said Fauconberg, “tomorrow will be time enough for your forming this projected placard; for I am much too weary, through my day’s excursion, to sally forth again.”

“And now, having distributed food to all within the hut, Fauconberg made a hasty retreat from it; even exhausted as he was with mental and bodily harass, to commence a new labour, that of cutting off all track made

by his footsteps to his dwelling, and raising the best bulwark he could form around it: and to effect this purpose, he collected brambles, cork-bark, fragments of the fallen rocks, and with infinite exertion and toil erected a barrier to efface all appearance of habitation, or of access into the woodland at this point; leaving his own egress, for the future, to the powers of his own activity.

Evening had performed her part, and given place to her successor night, ere Fauconberg had accomplished his arduous undertaking; when, weary and sad, he returned to the hut, there to obtain no portion of the repose which he required; but, to keep an anxious vigil through the silent hours, when all around was cheerless as his own situation; to watch by his friends, and guard them as long as he had power, from all those fearful dangers which seemed impending.

Another day dawned upon the mental and bodily sufferers in our miserable hut, after a night that seemed of almost Greenland duration; when Fauconberg, with a faint smile,

inspired by a home-remembrance of how a farmer, in his father's diocese, incited his labourers to industry by the curious exhortation of, "when 'tis tired of work yourselves are, boys, just begin again" — set about his adoption of this mode of perseverance in toil, against the murmurs of exhausted nature; and the bright luminary of day had scarcely sent his cheering rays into our hut, to dissipate its gloom, ere Ramirez requested materials to arrange his placard for the summons of Senor Felix; and whilst this artful bandit was thus employed, Cameron cited Albert to a cautious whisper.

"Beware of that miscreant! Destroy his placard, or he will destroy you. Alas! my friend, you little know the peril by which, through my cruel destiny, you are encompassed."

"I do know it, my friend," responded Albert, cheeringly; "but, in compliance with your advice, I place my hope on high."

The hour at length approached, in which the abbess of Santa Barbara had pointed out

a chance of safety for Fauconberg's visit to the ermita. The foot of poor Carlo had swelled from the wound inflicted by the thorn, and he seemed not, as usual, on the alert to spring off with his master; yet, to adopt a more certain measure for confining the attached animal to a home station, Albert had withheld all food from him, till the moment preceding his own departure; when a tempting repast of broiled rabbit engaged his attention, while his master effected his stolen march from his faithful attendant.

When Fauconberg had performed his descent from his little fortification, by an almost perpendicular rock, he found its termination placed him at the entrance of a small cave, which was sheltered from observation by the luxuriant ilex that flourished there, although with scarcely an inch deep of soil to fix a root in; and this secluded chamber of rock our adventurer now converted into an attiring room; where, disencumbering himself from his military habiliments, he assumed his palmer's weeds.

Fauconberg's figure was that of perfect symmetry, his limbs in consequence were moulded for activity; and from serving in the light brigade, he had been trained to muscular exertion, which now enabled him with ease to ascend and descend points and passes of these stupendous mountains, which many might have found inaccessible; and, without accident of any kind, he gained the perilous eminence upon which the ermita stood; and where, concealed behind its mouldering altar, he found a basket containing the promised supply, consisting of vegetables, fruit, a small loaf, an anodyne for Dermod, a bottle of cow's milk, and another of Malaga.

Full of ardent gratitude for such a supply from the helpless unfortunate, who so piteously required the boons of benevolence herself, Fauconberg sighed whilst placing in the convent basket a brace of wild fowl, with a rabbit he had snared, through the painful and humiliating feeling inspired by having power only of making so inadequate a return.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ermita was elevated on a pinnacle of the mountain chain, opposite to those which rose behind the hut; consequently, Fauconberg had to wind down into the very depth of the ravine, in order to cross the stream which separated the stupendous boundaries; but wishing to shorten his absence from home, by avoiding the extended meanderings of the regular pathway, our adventurer accomplished his route in a more undeviating line, through which many almost impassable obstacles impeded his way; yet still he persevered, believing it not only the most expeditious course, but the one least liable to observation.

But at length he was compelled to tread the pathway by the water's margin, in order to gain the pass across it; when, the moment he emerged from the delving woodland, out from

a thicket issued an aged *gitano** woman, mounted upon a *borrico*.†

The usual courteous greetings having been exchanged, the gipsy demanded from Albert, “if he would not buy some of her wares?”

“What do you deal in, pray?”

“Prescience, pilgrim.”

“Indeed! Then for this shining piastre, the last alms I received, predict ‘health and wealth for me, with an uninterrupted pilgrimage to the shrine for which I am bound.’”

“*Salud y pesetas, amigo*, I trust I may predict for you; but not an uninterrupted pilgrimage;” this self-dubbed oracle pronounced. “The banditti of yon mountain are pouring down to intercept some rich plunder, appertaining to the retreating army; and should the peasant boy, who fled yesterday at noon from a sequestered *cortijo*,‡ now chance to pass this valley with a weak escort, his late protector to a sacred sanctuary will have performed his service thither to little purpose.”

* Gipsy. † An ass. ‡ Isolated farm-house.

“That peasant boy, then, is not in safety!” exclaimed Albert, in dismay. “Your path has, I perceive, lately wound by Santa Barbara.”

“No, pilgrim, I have nothing to do with saints. They are not patrons of my tribe. But you, who bend at the shrine of angels, save one from sacrilegious hands. Watch yon path, and give the word to any defenceless cavalcade you see descending, ‘that danger is abroad.’ Farewell! *ah, hijo mio!*” and now, with a goad animating her *borrico* into a nimble trot, the gitano re-entered the close thicket she had emerged from, like a warning witch vanishing on her broomstick into “fog and filthy air;” leaving poor Fauconberg as much dismayed as if he had never aided in vanquishing the enemies of his country. But in the field his duty lay in exertion for the success of the banners he fought under, and his life held as part of the purchase of that success, to be laid down on demand. Now, the existence of three individuals depended upon his; and, for their sakes, he felt that he

ought not to sport with it by turning knight errant to rescue distressed damsels; but yet, to leave the lovely and innocent Alvina to fall into the hands of the wretches who were seeking her, struck with horror the benevolence of his heart; and the more he reflected upon the cruelty of withholding his aid in the moment she might so absolutely require it, the more his feelings revolted from such a line of conduct: but not until gratitude to the abbess of Santa Barbara presented a claim for the preservation of her young relative, did his imperative duty to his helpless dependents relax its hold upon his resolution.

“But, if I must risk my life for the preservation of the lovely Alvina,” he at length mentally said, “I will do it in my proper person. I will not, in disguise, sneak into the arms of death. I will die as a British soldier, and sell my life as dearly as I can to the purchaser.”

From the moment Fauconberg formed this determination, the more judicious his reflection led him to consider it. He would by it disencumber himself from the

dangerously impeding flowing drapery; his arms would then be at his full command; and should he providentially survive any conflict with the banditti, their vengeance for his interference would be directed against him in proper person, and he should still have the pilgrim's habit to envelop him when disguise should be expedient.

In the spot where he was thus perplexed, Albert was at no loss for shelter to perform his transmutation; and when he had resumed his own form, he carefully concealed his palmer's weeds and heavy srip in the hollow of an ancient tree, and then, with unaffected piety, invoked the protection of Heaven ere he took his station, where he could command the most judicious view of those who might descend the pathway from Santa Barbara.

Here he had not remained long until he beheld, turning a point into his full view, a group, who, he doubted not, were those the gitano's intelligence had anticipated. They were four in number, mounted on mules, and

were descending as rapidly as was compatible with safety.

For one moment Fauconberg conceived them to be the bearers of the expected French plunder, but there being no appearance of a guard banished that idea. As they drew nearer, he perceived they were a party of gitanos, composed of two men, a woman, and a boy.

“They are part of that sibyl’s tribe,” said now the thoughts of Fauconberg; “and she acted her deceptions part to entrap me for their prey: yet how came she to know that I protected the lovely Alvina to Santa Barbara, and to recognise me as that protector beneath my pilgrim’s garb?”

He now bestowed another earnest gaze of observation upon the advancing party; the beauty of the mules they rode bespoke no accordance with their garb. Their manner, too, seemed that of haste, alarm, and caution. They drew still nearer; and, whilst undecided whether to fly or remain, he discovered in the

gipsy-boy the fascinating graces of the interesting Alvina.

And now Albert's prompt impulse was to fly, but it was flight to meet the lovely fugitive; and, as he darted forward for this purpose, with dismay he beheld a man, in that dress which unequivocally proclaimed his being one of the banditti, dart from ambush towards the gitanos, with his formidable gun levelled at the foremost of the party.

The impetuous spring forward of Fauconberg seemed like that of an arrow from a bow; and, ere the twang of such might have resounded, he had grasped the gun from the hand of the surprised bandit, and flung it into the torrent below.

The now infuriated robber instantly faced about to attack this unthought-of intruder on his sanguinary project, when, beholding in this potent adversary a British officer, his ferocity seemed at once to transform into panic, affording to Fauconberg the advantage of choice of ground and time to draw his trusty sword, which had yielded him victory in even more

unequal contests ; and, with its point at the brigand's breast, he grasped the ruffian with the firm hold of undaunted resolution, and turned him to the edge of a fearful precipice, where one retrograde step in struggle might hurl him to the bottom ; and thus bereft the trembling bandit of power to draw one defensive weapon from the store his girdle so openly supplied.

“ Push on, or the banditti will be down upon you,” Albert now shouted to the dismayed gitanos ; when instantly the soft voice of the timid Alvina, strengthened to the tones of animated firmness, thrilled to the heart of Albert, in a decided negative to his entreaty for their rapid flight.

“ We cannot leave our gallant champion to be butchered in our cause,” exclaimed the principal of the gitano men, in accents of the purest Castilian.

“ Fear not for me,” Fauconberg replied, “ but fly, I conjure you ! I am equal to the conflict.”

The other gipsy man now seized the bridle

of Alvina's mule, and, with the affectionate address of a mayoral to the animal, set off at full speed, the path in this part admitting of such rapid advance; and in defiance of the grateful Alvina's cries and supplications, "not to leave their champion in such peril," pushed on in their retreat; an example the other man without hesitation followed, by seizing the bridle of the woman's mule and galloping after his companions.

Fauconberg would have been fully equal to the conflict, had he been supplied with arms for contention, like that wide range his adversary's belt contained, and which in full view proclaimed a fearful contest, were he to allow the robber's hand the power to use these weapons. For the moment, the assassin was completely under his control, but the most trifling movement might turn the balance of the trembling scale; and then, even the tried prowess of his sword and valour might avail him little against a bullet's swifter and surer aim.

Albert felt the exertion he was making to enchain the bandit's arm from effecting mis-

chief, or his heels from flight after the retreating fugitives, was exhausting his strength, whilst that of the ruffian was, through inaction, undiminished; and with this feeling came conviction, that the fearful odds could not long continue in his own favour. He could, it was true, cut down the brigand as he now stood at the mercy of his sword; but in this position, the man was his captive, and totally unarmed; so that to plunge a weapon through his breast, whilst thus defenceless, would be little short of murder; and the heart of Fauconberg restrained his hand.

Every passing moment was now replete with menace to Albert's safety. The words of the old gitano, "The banditti are pouring down," still sounded in his ears; "that rescue might come to his prisoner in formidable array;" and every passing moment, he also expected the exertions of his captive to commence for the resumption of power to act; and Albert was collecting all his force to meet the potent struggle, when a rope suddenly encircled the bandit's body, and drew him by a resistless

jerk to the bole of the tree Fauconberg had placed his own back against; and behind which the old gitano now appeared to Fauconberg as a very witch in truth, for she had dexterously contrived her band should take her captive's arms within its circle, as it encompassed him with the apparent power of supernatural agency.

The gipsy at this time was dismounted, and she who had appeared on the *borrico* like a hunch-backed witch of dwarfish dimensions, now presented stature towering above even Fauconberg's own, whilst each movement of her limbs proclaimed that muscular strength which age could not display; and every turn seemed wild, and fierce, and rapid; and muttering strange jargon, she firmly bound the brigand to the tree, to the effectual rescue of the grateful Fauconberg.

"Thou Biscayan *diablo*!" exclaimed the captive, who, now released from the appalling grasp of a British officer, had found the resumption of his oral faculty, "thou shalt perish for

this. I can whistle for prompt aid, though my arms are in thy h—ll—h fetters.”

“*Ha, tuno!* thou mayest whistle for it,” responded the gitano, as, with comic dexterity, which, in a less serious moment, would have forcibly assailed the risible faculties of the naturally lively Albert, she fixed a gag in the boaster’s mouth.

“Now whistle to the winds,” she continued in her Biscayan dialect. “But look you yonder, senor, there lies now your duty.”

Fauconberg, looking to the point the gipsy motioned to, there beheld the fugitives stationary, as if in some sort of consternation. To behold and to rush forward were the actions of the same moment; and ere he had made advance in a dozen rapid paces, the old gitano was at his side, huddled up into her travelling compression upon the back of her *borrico*, when, resuming the Spanish of the province, she now addressed Albert.

“*Salud y pesetas, amigo!* for a valiant son of a valiant nation. Your sword has the

blade of valour, and its sheath is that of mercy. I have served you for the Lady Alvina's sake: I will now serve you for your own. Fear no present molestation from the mountain horde; that dastard, yonder, was their advance scout. A full quarter of an hour must yet intervene ere they come down to seek the prize they have in view; but ere that time we foxes must be kennelled."

"Only one quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Fauconberg, in alarm. "Lady Alvina cannot by that time be secure from their pursuit."

"We must issue the mandate for speed," returned the gipsy. "Once out of the valley, and she will find safe conveyance in the coach of her guardian, who is as proud and as unforgiving a *diablo* as ever registered transgressions in indelible characters. Ah! brave senor, if yours be a feeling heart, let it melt for the sorrows of Lady Alvina; but, if you prize your happiness, allow not her image a basis in that heart."

At this moment the female in Lady Alvina's suite beheld Fauconberg in his rapid advance,

and, with a shout of joy, she exclaimed, "He is safe! Our brave deliverer is unhurt! Revive, revive, you have not caused the death of our brave champion!"

Fauconberg paused in his approach; an intuitive feeling of delicacy forbade his presenting himself before the lovely Alvina in the moment he was thus unequivocally informed that interest for his fate had subdued her; but though he advanced not, his heart was with her.

The man who had spoken in the pure Castilian, and whose every movement proclaimed pride of no common mould, and in whom Fauconberg felt convinced he beheld the guardian of Alvina, now exclaimed, in an ungracious tone, as if highly disconcerted at the approach of their preserver;—

"The valiant señor is, I perceive, unhurt; and come to receive our thanks."

"No!" Fauconberg proudly replied, as with majestic step he now advanced, "I am come to apprise you, that for not longer than a very few moments can your remaining in this valley

be exempt from peril. Your thanks, senor, are for this good gitano; to her only are you indebted for your safety, and for the intelligence which must impel your immediate flight."

"You will take a recompense more substantial than the thanks of gratitude," said the proud hidalgo, as he offered a handful of ducats to the gipsy.

"No, no," exclaimed the gitano firmly, and with gesticulations expressive of strong feeling; and now again, speaking in her mingled jargon of Biscayan dialect and gipsy gibberish, "not thus will I receive my recompense: but, when I appear before you to ask of you the pardon of a sinner, I will claim it for my services this day: yet, my services were little compared to those this gallant stranger rendered you. I only told him of your danger; he risked his life for your deliverance."

"Every moment of delay is replete with peril to you," said the agitated Albert, who had received an eloquent look of gratitude from Alvina, ere she hid her burning blushes,

and her tears, upon the bosom of her female companion; the one glowing because Fauconberg had again beheld her in attire ungenial to her sex, and the other flowing in joy that her gallant champion was safe from harm.

“Come, Guzman,” exclaimed the haughty Don, raising his lovely charge from the support of her attendant, and placing her on her mule; “come, Guzman, proceed.”

Guzman seized the bridle of Alvina’s mule, and obeyed. “*A Dios! A Dios!* my preserver!” Alvina exclaimed, as she thus was hurried from him, and with a look and tone which transfixed Fauconberg to gaze upon her retreating form; when, from this trance of mingled soft delight and sad regret, he was aroused by the frigid accents of the haughty Spaniard.

“Should you ever visit Madrid, and leave your address with my banker, Don Pedro Ariol, for me, Don Ferdinand de Verodia, I will be most happy to evince my gratitude to our preserver in any form, save introduction to my family. But from England sorrow came to rend the hearts of half my house. In Eng-

land grew the thorn that rankles in the happiness of my young ward ; and no Englishman shall ever, with my approbation, obtain an entrance to my dwelling."

And now, feeling having subdued his pride for the moment, Don Ferdinand, whilst bitter tears were streaming down his quivering cheeks, pressed the hand of Fauconberg ; then placing his hand upon his heart, and then waving it in adieu, he set forward after his companions.

For some succeeding moments, Fauconberg stood gazing after this retreating party, as if transfixed there by some potent grief ; but at length the situation of his helpless charge arose to his remembrance ; and with it, alarm for his own safety ; when, turning to offer thanks and recompense to the kind gitano, for her effective aid, ere he should pursue his way, he found she had again vanished, leaving no trace behind.

Chagrined and disappointed, our adventurer now turned to the spot where his pilgrim's weeds were concealed, and again enveloped in

them, he bent his pensive way to the hut ; where he arrived fatigued and dispirited, although his heart glowed with lively gratitude to Heaven, for its signal protection of himself, and preservation of the fair fugitive from the hands of the banditti.

He found every individual in the hut in natural anxiety for some hope of succour, and all eager to read his eloquent countenance, as the genuine herald of what they might expect to hear : but the countenance of poor Albert wore pensiveness of even a more melancholy cast, than the hopelessness of their situation had before thrown over it ; and Dermot, in alarm, exclaimed :

“ *Och !* then, ’tis murdered yourself is, master Albert dear, and more grief to us ! ’Tis fatigue and anxiety for others that have proved the death of you. But, now we have kilt you, I hope your honour will leave us to our fate, and make the best of your way, dear, after the regiment.”

“ What ! Dermot, would you send a murdered man to haunt our poor regiment ? ” re-

plied his master, faintly endeavouring to beam a smile.

“What nonsense you chatter, Dermod,” said Gustavus, angry and alarmed — “even if my brother be ill, which Heaven forbid! — he cannot leave us, since he himself brought all of us but the intruder hither; and it is therefore his imperative duty to remain.”

“Faith, and an unthankful office he had, of that same, in bringing some of us hither,” replied Dermod. The next time, myself would advise his honour, to be letting the tree lie where it falls, lest it would prove the poison tree of black ——— of a — of something, not very *grateful* to the senses.”

“I am not ill, thank Heaven! — I am only weary; but I have brought hither this time something *very grateful* to the *sense* of taste,” said Albert, hastily, as he hurried to present every man a bunch of delicious grapes, from the gardens of Santa Barbara.

“You have encountered something to affect your mind,” said the grateful Cameron, in a whisper to his friend, as he stooped to present

the fruit — “remember, your single arm, valiant as it is, cannot defend us against numbers; and let not the moment of our inevitable doom be embittered by the dreadful pang of knowing we had brought destruction upon you, Fauconberg.”

“I have only met with strange adventures, which have unhinged me; but they are wholly independent of our situation here, believe me,” responded Albert.

“May your grateful slave, senor, make bold to inquire, if you have posted my placard?” said Ramirez, in his insidious tones of servile hypocrisy, when presented with his portion.

The moments of Fauconberg’s absence from the hut that day had been so devoted to adventure, that he had bestowed no thought upon the placard, after he had torn it, and buried the fragments, lest one atom should be borne by the wind, to prove a clew to the asylum of the crafty writer: he therefore had not arranged a reply for a question he could not but anticipate; but now, prompt in his determination to lure Ramirez, by false hopes,

from any purpose which desperation might inspire, he borrowed a little of the bandit's own wile, and answered —

“I fear, Senor Felix will not pass this way so soon as you expect; for there now exists an alarm amongst the few remaining inhabitants of this almost depopulated neighbourhood, relative to a formidable banditti, which infests this province, and which has spread itself in every direction, to intercept a rich prize, conveying by secret passes to a French general.”

“What! general ———’s plunder?” exclaimed Ramirez, in a tone of horrid rapture, whilst every line of his terrific countenance became more deformed by demoniac exultation.

“I believe that is the general’s name; but as neither the loss nor the capture could affect any one here, it made no impression on my memory.”

The exultation of this avaricious miscreant, revelling in expected gratification, sent a shout of joy from his heart, to be smothered by

prudence on his lips ; but so much of it escaped as to awaken the angry observation of the sagacious Carlo.

Fauconberg found various employments for the remainder of this eventful day ; but none which he performed with greater anxiety than exercising his ingenuity in the formation of a fishing-rod ; intended not so much for obtaining food for his own distressed garrison, as evincing gratitude to the interesting relative of the fair Alvina, who now seemed blended with every thought ; since the idea of her having sorrows, and that those sorrows had derived their source from one of his own countrymen, had fastened on his mind with resistless influence, embodying every conjecture for their cause, which could pain a heart that had imbibed but too firm an interest for this young unfortunate.

Another cheerless night drew its sable curtain around the hut of Fauconberg. To the wounded and sick the convent gifts had brought such salutary comfort, that they could sleep, regardless of their situation ; and

not one more indefatigably than Ramirez, so consolatory to him had proved the intelligence of the rich booty expected by his horde.

But that balm which he had brought to others distilled no drop for Fauconberg. He could not sleep; for the ungrateful Briton, who had blighted the happiness of the lovely Alvina, blasted his repose.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE was little variation in the morning employments of Fauconberg, save that, through the gift of the kind abbess, he had now to exert his ingenuity in milling chocolate, to treat his hospital with this national beverage for their breakfasts ; and when the hour drew nigh, which the abbess had led him to consider as one of safety for his ramble, he left the hut ; and about twenty minutes preceding the time of *siesta*, he commenced his descent from his little fortress, calculating that those brigands who sought their day dreams, were either established in their dormitory, or drawing near to their mountain fortifications.

Under firm belief of safety for the two subsequent hours, Fauconberg adopted no measure for the confinement of Carlo, who seemed to bear in his remembrance his disappointment of the preceding day ; for now

he appeared as his master's shadow, and on the watch to spring off with him into action.

Without adventure of any description, Fauconberg wound his quick march to the stream, where his anticipation of ample sport was fully realized; but from this stream branched off the pathway to Marcella's cottage. That pathway he had trodden with the lovely being, for whom his bosom had imbibed such potent interest; and this vicinity to a spot so genial to his present feelings, beguiled him into infatuated lingering there, that told him he had been more than imprudent, when at length the complete overflow of his scrip aroused him from his trance, to spring into action; now, by his own folly, too probably not devoid of danger.

Nothing but promptitude in his ascent to the *ermita*, could now secure him from the probable peril of encountering some of the banditti, already perhaps on the watch to sally from their dormitory again to seek for prey; and well remembering the friendly warning of

the young bandit, 'to beware of Carlo,' he vainly now wished his poor faithful companion safe in the hut with Dermod.

"Yet, why wish for his absence?" he mentally said, as a sudden glow of awful gratitude warmed his breast. "Has he not already proved the agent of a merciful Providence, in rescuing me from destruction?"

As these reflections occupied the mind of Albert, he commenced his ascent of the almost perpendicular and stupendous rock on which the *ermita* stood; and just as he had gained the most perilous projection of the jutting stone by which he was to reach the summit, a shrill whistle, sounding like that which had appalled him in the dead of night, struck suddenly on his ear, as if in almost close contact with the sounder; and which caused him to start with so dangerous a rebound, that had he been endowed with less strength and agility, must have precipitated him into the torrent below.

Recovering his equilibrium, Fauconberg faced about to meet the danger he conceived

at hand, when, to his surprise as well as joy, not an individual but himself was visible upon the vast mass to which he had climbed; but though convinced danger was not so near as he had apprehended, he still paused to make his hasty yet anxious observation of all around, in search of the sounder of this alarming whistle; when soon he beheld one of the sheep-clad infesters of that valley, standing on the rocks of the opposite boundary of the intervening ravine; and in the same moment saw a most active member of the same community, scrambling rapidly up to the point occupied by his *camarada*.

Fauconberg had traversed this valley and its boundaries so often, that he could now accurately determine distances; he therefore felt assured of his accomplishing his mission to the *ermita* and his return to his hut, ere these consociates, however rapid in their movements, could wind their way round to intercept his flight; and considering it better policy to proceed undauntedly in the same

course in which they had observed him, he resumed his quick march upward; when again, from the situation of the region he had gained, sound was distinctly conveyed to him from the lower ground, on which the stationary brigand stood shouting to his comrade, who was still on his ascent.

“Look at yon flying *diablo*,” Fauconberg now heard growled out, in the deep-toned voice of the formidable bandit he had twice before encountered. “When last I saw him performing his aeronaut feats, he was flying downwards toward his own region; now he is soaring to snatch a passing cloud to sail through the air, to send us hurricanes by wholesale. *Por vida de San Jago!* but I’ll singe his wings for him. My long gun shall stop his flight.”

“Zounds! man, leave all aeronauts to their revels in the air; and do you descend to earthly concerns!” exclaimed the active brigand, just arriving by his comrade’s side, to stay his hand from its sanguinary purpose

—“ for look ! behold ! Vasquez, there yonder goes a traveller, and by his seeming, one worth a little conversation with.”

“ I see no traveller,” responded the growl of Vasquez.

“ But I do ; there, by the eastern angle of ——— ; but the boughs of that intervening chesnut intercept our view at this moment ; but having got the scent, that’s enough ; so to your legs, man, to your legs, and all shall soon be ours ;” and now, grasping the hand of his deliberating *camarada*, he almost propelled him into a prompt descent, in a direction diametrically opposite to the path which led to the hut of Fauconberg.

During the above parley, Fauconberg had gained the *ermita*, and entering behind the altar, converted that into both an observatory and a shield ; and from whence he beheld the descent of the brigands : but though with a full view of the pathway they were making for at his command, no vestige of any traveller could he descry ; he therefore doubted not of its being a manœuvre for preventing the

wanton cruelty of the sanguinary Vasquez: but although distance, and a more elevated position, allowed not of his absolutely ascertaining the features of this presumptive friend; yet from his air and gait, and the apparent purpose of his mind, Albert pronounced him to be the identical young man by whom he had been warned of the betraying accompaniment of Carlo.

And this belief soon became conviction, when the direction taken by the robbers guaranteed his security from Vasquez, and led him without further delay to seek out the treasure he had encountered this peril to obtain, and discovered lying upon the abbess's basket, a dog's spiked collar, such as the Spanish shepherds have in use for their dogs, where wolves infest the mountains, with a skin of curling fur, to which was affixed a leathern belt and several thongs; wrapped up in which was a scroll, containing these words: "English ingenuity can adapt these things to prudent purposes."

The purpose was as obvious as the donor

to the amazed and dismayed Albert. His visits to the *ermita* were, he saw by this incontestable proof, revealed to one of the banditti; and although this developement of his secret was betrayed to him in the form of good offices, yet upon the wicked who could place dependence?

That this young bandit was the son of Marcella he could scarcely doubt, and that his services were, by some means, inspired through gratitude for the safe convoy of Lady Alvina to the monastery; for they had commenced ere his rescue of her and her party the preceding day; but as Fauconberg knew not exactly upon what basis this gratitude was founded, he could form no estimate of its solidity: but firmly believing the gleams of virtuous propensities in a vicious heart were as the weak efforts of a flickering sunbeam, to be quickly overcast by the overwhelming clouds of evil passions; so, as his apparent friend was a confessed brigand, little dependence could be placed on the good faith of one whose trade was robbery and murder.

Yet hope buoyed up the spirits of Albert ; and *Esperance en Dieu* being his heart's motto, he would not anticipate evil, but clung to the pleasanter propensity of being grateful for present benefits.

Fauconberg promptly perceived that the transmutation of the beautiful Carlo into a hideous wolf-dog would prove no task of difficulty, except through inducing the animal to wear the disguise ; but prudent as the effort might be, it could not, from the delay it must occasion, be attempted there with safety ; he therefore disposed of Carlo's disguise beneath his own, and hastened to exchange presents with the kind abbess of Santa Barbara.

The convent supply of this day was chiefly from their gardens, and accompanied by a note of grateful acknowledgment for the gifts of the preceding day ; containing also the pleasing intelligence “ of their diocesan having graciously taken their distress into consideration, and promised them speedy relief ; when the power would be once more vested

in the abbess of Santa Barbara, to evince how she could feel the influence of gratitude."

Fauconberg, having completed the business which had drawn him to the ermita, and reminded by prudence of the dangers of delay, set out for his miserable abode with the same rapidity of action that appeared to have excited the suspicions of the sanguinary Vasquez, and reached his hut without further adventure.

"Has my dear and noble preserver heard aught of the Senor Felix?" exclaimed Ramirez, the moment Fauconberg re-appeared.

"No," replied Fauconberg; "I have obtained no intelligence of him."

"And, my placard —"

"Remains just where I placed it."

"*Och*, master Albert dear!" now Dermot exclaimed, "it will be rejoicing the cockles of your compassionate heart, and good luck to it, to be seeing how stoutly I can walk; that is, on my hands and knees; to be taking a mouthful of the fresh air, whilst your honour will be taking a mouthful of food; which myself humbly hopes you will lose no time in

cooking, after all your fatigue, master Albert darling."

Fauconberg, perceiving by Dermod's manner that he was impatient to impart something unheard by others, replied, —

"I am going immediately to broil some trout, for all my invalids who can relish such food; and if you put on your coat, I will make no objection to your inhaling the air for a short period. I will summon you when my fire is kindled."

Fauconberg now left the hut for the purpose he had stated; and scarcely had a moment intervened, ere the anxious and faithful Dermod was at his heels.

"Why, Dermod, in your impatience for a conference with me," said his master, kindly, "are you thus regardless of your own safety?"

"Sure, your honour, 'tis for the preservation of my safety, that myself is regardless of it. *Och*, master Albert dear! but I wisht yourself would say, 'it will be no crime to lodge the contents of my pistol nately in the head of that rapparee squintabus widin;' or

'tis lodged in the bowels of the earth, or in the stream below, to be feeding the ravens in the air, we all, ere long, will be ; for myself thinks, that besides his being a rascal, and no nosegay to boot, that it is some sort of necromancer he is, and holds cabals wid evil spirits during your honour's absence."

"What can you mean, Dermod? That he holds conference with the evil spirits of his own diabolical mind, whether I am absent or present, I have no doubt."

"Sure, your honour can never be after forgetting the shots which were fired by nobody at all, at all. You considered that same a mighty quare thing ; and myself, from what occurred to day, now thinks it was imps done it, he calt up to shoot us ; but the good spirits turned the shots aside."

"Were there more mysterious shots fired to day?" Fauconberg demanded, in dismay.

"Faith, were there, your honour ; only they flashed in the pan."

"Were my brother and Mr. Cameron aware of this?"

“No, not a morself; for ’twas fast asleep they were: but the way of it was, that devil widin set about snoring for the bare life, and sleeping as uneasy, for all the world, as if the night-mare of misdeeds was rocking his yellow carcass in a cradle of disquiet; which was just as he wint on the time the invisible shots were fired. So myself supposes ’tis his way for raising spells, and that he leads his imps by the nose. But I would not let on to him that I knew it was a dealer in magic he was, lest he would think I’d be afraid to defend my master and myself; so wid that, up I reared myself on my elbow, wid my pistol cocked in t’other hand; and just as he struck off the biggest snort, the calling up his legions had required, myself civilly addressed him: —

“Sir, says I, in the bouldest tones that sickness could call up — ‘Sir, if that busy nose of yours means to be having an echo to-day, as myself suspects it is in training for, you must be excusing the liberty I mean to take, in just shooting through the head that

nasal trump belongs to, a nate response to your three-tongued echo.'

"So, your honour, wid that, a twang struck on my ear, which made me think it was about our ears the hut was tumbling; and the rap recoiled several inches on his bed, as if he had been riding on the carriage of a gun, in the moment of its discharge; and sorrow doubt, I doubted but the d—'s artillery had been at work there, till I broke the spell by speaking; for instantly the rap of a necromancer wakened up wid himself, and after staring about him, as if 'twas quite innocent he was, he began to shrink, as if he was afraid of the pistol I had levelled at his head; and to jabber about it, in his unintelligible lingo, which, being no scholar, I could not understand."

Fauconberg, now starting up from the crouching position he had assumed, to give his cautious hearing to Dermod's whispered intelligence, was hastening to examine the exterior of the hut, when Dermod caught him by the leg.

"Och, for the love of Heaven, master Al-

bert dear!" he said, "don't be venturing near the spot where his imps are at their gambols; for who knows but it was a train they laid; and they will explode you from their society the moment yourself treads on their enchanted premises."

"I will tread cautiously, for fear of trains," returned his master; "but examine the premises I must."

"Well then, your honour, just let me be crawling in to affront him; for though sorrow speak can I speak to him in his unintelligible lingo, I'll be bail 'tis English he understands as well as the best of us; and it requires no conjuror to discern that same. So in I'll go, and tell him, in plain English, 'that it is a rapparee he is.' And if that does not engage his attention from your honour, by affronting him, myself is no great shakes at projecting."

"No," returned Fauconberg, "we must temporize with, not affront the miscreant, with whom our evil destiny has thus cruelly embarrassed us; so, here, take in these grapes, and by distributing them you will effectually

monopolize his attention from my employment."

"Oh, faith will it, for he sucks up our elegant grapes, as I wisht his yellow carcass would do, were they grape-shots myself was distributing," returned Dermot, as he crawled away in obedience. "But, master dear, be cautious."

Fauconberg was cautious, not to let the brigand hear him; and after the most minute investigation, he ascertained that the sword and cork-bark of which he had composed the hut, had, where it ran parallel with the brigand's bed, been evidently displaced, and then re-instated by a slovenly hand; and also, that from this very spot where this breach had been made, there ran a continued vista, which yielded an uninterrupted view of the valley beneath.

Painfully now was Fauconberg convinced, that the twang which Dermot had heard was from a bow; and that a signal-arrow had gone forth to lead destruction to his helpless friends and him; and though, through the ordinance

of pitying Heaven, it might be led far from the course intended by Ramirez, yet, at all events, it would be wise to fortify the spot by every means he could devise, to guard against a repetition of such a dangerous measure.

But this fortification only could operate against the repetition of such signals, not counteract the mischief, which might have already accomplished its intended aim for their destruction; and what was to be effected without counsellor to advise with, or arm to aid him in averting the possibly impending danger, posed the judgment of poor Fauconberg. The bandit chief, it was true, was completely in his power; but even did the safety of his friends lead him to the horrible immolation of their perilous guest, *they* could not move away from danger; and if the horde were led by the signal of Ramirez, or through their own researches, to find their chief, would their finding him a corse soften their ferocity, or sheathe the murderer's dagger? Nor, he felt convinced, could even the adoption of so dire an alternative avail, in shielding them

from the vengeance of the disappointed followers of Ramirez; for if the arrow found its unerring way to the haunts of any of the numerous troop, they would know where their chief had been conveyed, as now Fauconberg doubted not Ramirez having outwitted him, when he had imprudently intrusted him with writing materials, by composing a billet, to despatch by his feathered Mercury; which he now believed had found concealment in the stiff unwieldy cross-belt, which he had often wondered how his guest could persevere in wearing, whilst doomed to remain in a recumbent posture.

Should he himself go seek the arrow? became a question in Albert's mind. By the direction of the vista, he could trace the course through which to seek it; but, after a few moments' anxious observation of the line, he, with dismay, saw it led to the pass which wound to the banditti's fortress. And now his heart thanked Alvina for her providential information, as it enabled him to shun the road to

inevitable destruction ; which, but for her, he might so unwittingly have trodden. In such a track, could he doubt that some bandit had picked up the billet of his chief?

As Fauconberg still painfully contemplated the probable dangers with which presumptive evidence thus showed he was surrounded, he was struck with the conviction the vista was not the work of chance, but of the horde, to send forth arrows from those high points of observation.

The more Fauconberg meditated upon the subject, the more firm became his conviction of an arrow having been shot from the hut ; but, to place his suspicions beyond all doubt, he suddenly re-entered the dwelling, saying, whilst his eyes were fixed in scrutiny upon the countenance of Ramirez :—

“ I have just observed an arrow sticking in the bole of a tree, at some distance below us. Were the point toward us, I should have conceived it had been destined to bring us intelligence.”

The countenance of Ramirez at once betrayed his guilt, by its scowl of bitter disappointment.

“ I will go for this arrow,” continued Fauconberg, “ as it may prove useful to me.”

“ Do no such thing,” exclaimed his brother, peevishly: “ you promised us trout; but you care not how you consign us to the tortures of hunger, so you can accomplish your boyish amusements. What, I suppose, robbing birds’ nests will be your next manly exploit.”

“ Faith, but it is the eagle’s nest, or rather the British lion’s den, that will soon be robbed,” said Dermot; “ and all the life in it, worth taking, sucked out by the vultures of these parts, if that arrow proves a special messenger; so, for the mercy of Heaven, master Albert dear, intercept it; and twang it back to the heart of the bow I suspect its having sprung from.”

“ I implore you, my brave, my benevolent protector!” exclaimed Ramirez, in the silvery tones of his hypocrisy, yet tremulous in their sound, “ not to endanger your precious safety

by such a perilous attempt. You have, my benign protector, already heard these mountains are the resort of desperate banditti. Now the monks in the neighbourhood, too cowardly to oppose these formidable miscreants by manly prowess, have manufactured a deadly poison, in which they dip barbed arrows, and inhumanly send them forth in showers, to destroy the horde; and were you, my life's preserver, to touch one of them, alas! alas! your instant death would prove the inevitable consequence."

"*Augh* then, *musha*, *monsieur* conjuror, how came you so 'cutely to be knowing all this, stretched out there on your rushes?" exclaimed Dermot; for Ramirez, thrown out of his self-possession, had made his artful statement in tolerably good English. "I'll be bail you sucked in all that knowledge through your nose this morning, which twanged again wid the budget; and by the same organ, myself supposes, you scented out the gift of our mother tongue."

"What nonsense! to suppose what you

insinuate, that this man fired the arrow my brother speaks of!" said Gustavus. "It was utterly impossible without our knowledge; unless, indeed, he deals in magic, which his miraculous acquirement of our language, which a few days since he announced his total ignorance of, may lead us to suspect. Hey, monsieur! don! or d—l! are you an astrologer?"

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Ramirez, relapsing into French; "I an astrologer! I profess an occult science! I a meddler with the awful planets! *O, mon Dieu!*"

Dermot, having caught the word *planète* in the response of Ramirez, now vociferated, as emphatically as bodily weakness would permit, "So, then, you do confess your juggles wid the planets! But, upon my safe conscience, Mr. Monsieur, if sun or moon of your planets of darkness imagine mischief against my master, and cause harrum to harrum him, I am the one that will extinguish their light wid a leaden firebrand."

Cameron now called Albert to his pallet.

"You apprehend the approach of danger;

flee, therefore, I importune you, and save yourself whilst yet 'tis in your power."

"Cameron, you know me not," Albert replied. "If I cannot defend you with success, I will share your fate."

"Then help me to arise," responded Cameron; "I think I yet have power to prove myself a Briton."

"When necessity calls for the desperate exertion," returned Fauconberg, "you shall arise to aid me; but I now must give you food to renovate your strength for the possible conflict."

"What are you two in such close conference about?" demanded Rosstrevor anxiously.

"You shall know to-morrow," replied his brother; "at present I must away to my culinary employments."

"My left hand is formed of Irish metal, and can send a bullet to a miscreant's heart when called upon; remember that, dear Albert! And do you hear it, monsieur?" said Rosstrevor.

But monsieur, don, banditto, had now re-

course to his nasal trumpet, to proclaim his having found better employment than listening to what he did not like to hear ; and, driven to desperation through belief of his arrow having erred in its course, he now warily prepared to make ready another, to send off in the moment when the distribution of the promised food should monopolize general attention.

Dinner was at length brought in and distributed by poor Albert, and thankfully received by all ; for even Ramirez, though in dire wrath at the insurmountable barriers he had found to his project, partook of the meal with those, who, in solemn silence, and from sad presage of danger, took it as their last repast.

This melancholy dinner ended, Fauconberg once more quitted the hut, to improve, as far as the state of his resources would permit, the strength of his fortifications ; yet still, when all his toils were ended, he saw with a bitter sigh they were but mere impeding efforts ; and this too vulnerable barrier completed, he fixed the bayonet in Dermod's musket, which he placed on his shoulder, and took his desperate

station as the solitary sentinel of a forlorn hope, to pace his sad rounds, and watch the moment of assault as the signal of his own inevitable doom.

The sun at length set, and not a hope arose to cheer poor Fauconberg. The sombre grey of twilight proclaimed that the moment of necessity had arrived for lighting the short remnant of his last candle, to yield the power of observing Ramirez to the helpless, and, alas! he feared, the devoted victims within the miserable dwelling.

“But why,” suggested his sad thoughts, as his match performed its purpose, “why this reluctance to consume the last portion of a precious necessary? Can I hope to live to regret its light to-morrow? Oh, no; if the arrow has sped on its way, this light I must consider my last sand.”

CHAPTER XIII.

FAUCONBERG having set what he pronounced his last sand, returned to his anxious watch ; and scarcely had he paced his round with eyes straining in the intensity of gaze that sought to penetrate the veil of night, ere a loud shout of “ Master dear ! ” in the almost miraculously renovated voice of Dermod, recalled him to the hut, there to learn “ that a most extraordinary rising up and sudden flopping down of the intruder’s coverlid had extinguished their candle.”

He found Rosstrevor breathless with rage, Cameron exerting himself to arise, and Dermod, who had crawled out of his wretched bed, stretched over Ramirez to keep his hands from accomplishing new mischief.

Instantly Fauconberg relighted the candle, and placed it out of the reach of the manœuvring of Ramirez to extinguish it.

The nose of the culprit now sounded more emphatically than ever the profundity of his repose.

“*Augh*, faith,” exclaimed Dermod, “but ’tis I that am suffocated by Spanish odours! and no blame to me for that same, since not a fume of garlic, and other odours in him, but what he fairly snorted out of him under my nose. But you see, Monsieur Lingo, though your eyes have shut out the *light* of conviction, that we can *match* your pranks; but though his honour made *light* of your humbug this turn, the next you shall find the light of your eyes for ever extinguished.”

“What can you mean, Albert?” exclaimed Rosstrevor: “Is it your sapient purpose to spare this miscreant to become our executioner?”

“Gustavus,” responded his brother impressively, “you have arms, light, and observation here; and can take decisive measures the moment you believe them necessary.”

“Then let us make ready, for ’tis soon we shall be calt upon to present and fire; for that

snorting trumpet is always the foreboder of mischief; but upon my safe conscience, if it does not cease its rowl call, and if the carcass it belongs to does not lie stidy, I will soon make windows through it, to learn what instigates the commotion under that same covered. But you can't understand our cabals, Monsieur Lingo, as 'tis yourself can't speak our tongue."

"The nose obeys through instinct, and the body through sympathy, however," said Fauconberg, as he quitted the hut to resume his anxious vigil.

Again Fauconberg paced his fearful round, listening for danger from without and from within his fortress; and rapidly advancing midnight added to the gloom of all around him.

The anxiety of his vigil, caused by menace of such peril, allowed not his thoughts to turn to the mental conflict that might well subdue him. Upon his mother, his sisters, Alvina, the parents of Dermod, he ventured not to bestow a thought, 'durst not pause on the sug-

gestion that the fate of the massacred little garrison would remain a mystery only to be guessed at by their sorrowing friends, since their assassins would of course obliterate every trace of their remains ; and the only snatches he permitted himself to take from the intense vigilance of his watch, were, to raise up his heart to implore the protection of Heaven.

For some time the faint rays of a decreasing moon had been playing hide and seek behind the flying clouds, and the thick foliage surrounding Albert perplexing him with false lights and fancied shadows ; every breeze was hushed, the owl had ceased her doleful cries, (which had struck on the ear of Fauconberg as the death-knell of the devoted victims of his fortress) ; and Carlo, the close re-tracer of his master's steps, seemed to pause in fear of disturbing the awful silence which then reigned ; when a sudden rustling broke gently, but rapidly, through the foliage which overshadowed our solitary guard ; and almost in the moment the sound flew by him through the air, Albert

beheld, as Carlo darted forward to seize it, an arrow fall to the ground at the entrance of the hut.

The eager hand of Fauconberg sought and found the billet it conveyed; and in all the dismay inspired by the conviction of its being a despatch from the banditti to their chief, he seized it for his prize, and with it rushed into the hut; where, under pretext of moving the light to a more judicious station, he contrived to read, unobserved by his dangerous guest, what with amazement he found intended for himself, written in pure Spanish, but in characters which evidently evinced the writer feared the recognition of Ramirez.

Billet.

“Not to Philip’s right eye, but to the valiant young Englishman’s right understanding, these.

“The arrow of that treacherous ingrate your dwelling shelters has proved a faithful Mercury; and, by the clew it conveyed, will lead destruction to that very dwelling.

“ In the moment the first dawn of morn streaks the eastern horizon, you are to be assailed by a band, far too numerous and too desperate to be successfully resisted ; your safety, therefore, is only to be found in flight. The moment this reaches you, (and as it will be shot by an experienced archer, its reaching you is almost certain,) let yourself down by the northern angle of the crag, and in the cave beneath it you will find every facility for your prompt escape there arranged, by your old friend,

“ GITANA.”

The conviction thus communicated of his worst fears being verified did not strike with less horror upon the mind of Fauconberg, because it was anticipated ; and finding that he was thrown almost out of his self-possession by the shock, he precipitately retreated from the hut to conceal his agitation, till a moment's deliberation should decide, whether it would be most kind to reveal to his fellow victims the fate impending over them or not ; and

whilst, even in this moment of consternation, his heart felt full gratitude for the offered deliverance, it yet recoiled in horror from the proposition of forsaking his companions.

“No!” he mentally exclaimed, in the anguish of his bursting heart: “No, I will never leave them, until death drags my bleeding body from defending them.”

The moment of reflection sought by Fauconberg, led him on the wings of prompt decision to snatch up the collar which had been given him for disguising Carlo, and with it in hand he rushed into the hut; and with the powerful energy of an intrepid spirit sprang upon Ramirez, and secured his hands with the fetter he had ready for them; and which, with the quickly yielded aid of Dermod, was padlocked on the yelling miscreant. His hands thus manacled, all apprehension from his concealed arms ceased; and further security from his personal exertions was speedily accomplished by a rope, which had come into their possession with the blankets from the

regimental stores, with which their prisoner's legs were bound.

"What, dastards!" exclaimed Ramirez, again thrown out of his self-possession into the fluent utterance of English, "are you going to pillage and murder your poor unarmed guest? Oh, hospitality!"

"*Augh, musha!* then, but 'tis English you can spake, when 'tis unknownct to yourself your clapper runs, my lad! but let not this un-awares practice of our language be in lies, for that is not our pure tongue, my worthy! But whin we are after taking this pistol, and this one, and this poniard, and I'll be bail more arms yet by piles, from this grand arsenal we have taken by surprise, sorrow pillage or murder will yourself be having power to lay to our charge, whin we return your own charges against you, you powder monkey!"

"What can have occasioned your sudden adoption of this wise measure?" was a question that flew from the lips of Cameron and Rosstrevor in the same moment.

“ I have unquestionable authority for knowing,” responded Albert, “ that this man sent this day by an arrow a mandate to the banditti of which he is chief, to assail his benefactor, and massacre those who yielded him succour. I have, therefore, bound him in readiness to become by our hand the very first victim to his own diabolical treachery.”

“ Unbind me !” exclaimed the trembling miscreant, “ and I swear to send off another arrow to command ————— ; but I rave ! Who have I at my command, helpless unfortunate that I am ! cut off by wounds from my regiment ! Monsieur, my brave, my kind protector, it is my right to demand the name of my daring calumniator. Some base wretch, I aver, whose treachery you have more cause to fear than mine. My treachery ! *Mon Dieu !* I will annihilate the traducer ! What, betray my humane protector, — my — my friend !” And now the tears of hypocrisy seemed to gush from his eyes, and the faltering of wounded feeling to render his last accents almost inarticulate.

“ Turn your tears, sir, into those of contrition for your sins,” Fauconberg answered, as he continued his minute search for ammunition and arms about the miscreant’s bed and person. “ To me they stand confessed as those of hypocrisy, and fall without effect.”

“ Raise me up,” exclaimed Rosstrevor vehemently, “ and give me a loaded pistol made ready for discharge; and even deprived as I am of my right hand, I will make that man repent his temerity who dares attack me. By the dismay of your countenance, brother, I perceive it is no common danger which awaits us; yet I will not upbraid you for delivering me from the death-pang I had unconsciously suffered, to endure extended tortures and a painful exit. You did all for the best, and I forgive you, Albert.”

“ Oh, Gustavus!” exclaimed the heart-wrung Albert, flying, with quivering lips and tears gushing from his eyes, to his brother, and clasping him to his bosom in all the anguish his speech had given birth to; “ it was indeed for the best I followed the impulse of an

affectionate heart; but would to Heaven I had let you perish where you fell! Yet, only through my bosom shall they pierce my brother's."

"Ah! then, master dear," exclaimed the now half-sobbing Dermod, "won't it be better for us to be case-hardening our courage than to be drowning it in tears? And who knows but the blessed Saint Patrick may prove himself a better warrior than San Jago, and turn our death-beds over to those who would be murdering their betters! Come, come, cheer up, master Albert darling! and we'll leave arms wid master Gusty and Mr. Cameron, though sorrow much use arms will be of widout we find the powder and ball magazine of this grand arsenal. And I'll take another swig of that reviving cordial the kind Christian sent me by your kinder hand: 'tis bushels of good it has done me — success to it! and then your honour, and I, and Carlo, will take the out-posts in stout heart, and spit every bird that springs into our nest."

At this moment Dermod discovered a car-

touch box concealed about the captive Ramirez; and although it contained no very great supply, he hailed the prize with a shout of joy almost hysterical; and although he staggered through weakness from indisposition, yet affection for his master, and the dangers they were threatened by, seemed, with the anodyne of the abbess, to have improved his strength into the power at least of making efforts at exertion.

“Your advice is certainly judicious,” returned the dejected Albert: “I can better protect my friends at my out-post than within.”

“This miscreant you must leave to me,” said Cameron, who had been silently preparing himself for the expected conflict. “Your hand, my friend, to raise me; and your chunk of wood shall be my resting place, until, by your signal, I am called with Dermot to the conflict.”

Feebly the pale, yet interesting Cameron arose, and standing before the recumbent captive, held a miniature portrait in full view, as, in a voice struggling with emotion, he thus addressed Ramirez:—

“Ramirez Escalona! look on this portrait. Does not this send daggers through your guilty soul?”

It did seem to send forth weapons of some direful nature; for the moment his glaring eyes rested on the picture, he uttered a horrible yell, the hue of death overspread his visage, and his whole frame shook with convulsive agitation.

“Yes,” continued Cameron, “it does speak to your conscience. Oh, Ramirez!”

“Then I again behold my deadly foe!” exclaimed the wretch in hollow tones, almost inarticulate, from internal struggle. “I believed you laid in the grave with your accursed sire. Oh, had I not, when last we met, my hand should have managed better; but now may blasts from” ——— Here the maledictions which the demon within prompted him to utter were such as we will not shock our readers by repeating.

“Cameron,” Fauconberg exclaimed, with additional agitation, occasioned by this mysterious scene, “I perceive this man must not be

allowed to fall into the hands of his troop alive. I had hoped, as a hostage, to have made him the bond of our security."

"And such, my generous, my humane protector, you may yet make me," said the wretch, with all the mastery of tone and countenance which would have immortalized a professor of the histrionic art. "Preserve my life as a hostage, and I swear to be the preserver of yours."

"Trust him not," said Cameron.

"I can read him thoroughly," replied the agitated Fauconberg. "He would at present spare us, that, at some future period, he might wreak upon you some yet more signal mark of his vindictive spirit."

"If," said Cameron, in a cautious whisper to his friend, "if it become your desperate play to temporise with the miscreant and his horde, fearlessly leave my future fate to the care of pitying Heaven."

Prudence now suggested to Fauconberg the expediency of no longer tarrying in the hut; but ere he quitted it, as he believed for ever,

he pressed the hand of his brother and of Cameron, under the pretext of bidding them take courage, "since all might yet be well;" whilst under the impression, from the fearful odds, that all could not end well, he meant it for a sad and last adieu; and then, with an absolute command "for Dermod's remaining on his bed till he summoned him by name," he rushed from covert to resume his anxious watch, with Carlo for his *camarada*.

With eyes ever wandering to the east, he saw the first gleam that broke along the horizon, proclaiming to him that his last day had dawned; and in this awful moment, when the first ray had struck as the knell of death upon the heart of Fauconberg, the deep growl of Carlo gave confirmation to the intelligence the arrow brought; and Dermod, uncalled, and with nerves restrung by mental energy, firmly stood beside his master.

Carlo growled again, and darted forwards, just as a squirrel, bounding from its nest into a neighbouring tree, announced that the one it quitted in alarm had been vibrated by some

touch below. A fearful rustling succeeded, and the arm of a man penetrated the rampart which the exertions of Fauconberg had formed: the hand held a pistol — the former Carlo seized — the latter, Dermot.

“Advance one step, and your chief Ramirez dies!” Fauconberg exclaimed.

The head of another man now forced its way through the impeding brambles; but the progress of the body was opposed by the sword of Fauconberg, who had resigned the bayoneted musket to the hand of Dermot.

“Do not presume to oppose us,” exclaimed the fierce brigand — “we are here a numerous band, come to revenge the wound of Don Ramirez; and if you further injure him, by San Jago! you shall all perish by torture!”

“We fear not your threats,” returned Fauconberg, undauntedly — “come on then, and receive the reward of your temerity.”

The assailant, in a vigorous effort to push forward, placed his foot upon one of the loose fragments of rock, which our young engineer had collected for his fortification; it gave

way, precipitated the infuriated brigand to the bottom of the crag, and disabled him completely.

“ Give up the man who wounded Don Ramirez,” exclaimed another assailant, now opposing himself against the point of Dermod’s bayonet — “ give him up to our vengeance, and we will penetrate no further !”

“ *Och ! bubbaboo !* you’ll penetrate no further, won’t you ? and bad luck to you !” exclaimed Dermod. “ *Arrah*, be aisy, wid your humbug, for ’tis we that won’t let you penetrate at all, at all ; so be off wid yourself, and the d —— I speed the traveller !”

“ Cameron ! Cameron !” shouted out at least a dozen wild voices. “ The pistol told by whom the sanguinary deed was perpetrated ; and Cameron we demand !”

“ What are your terms of capitulation ?” exclaimed the dauntless Cameron, now, to the dire consternation of Fauconberg, staggering through weakness to the side of his intrepid friend.

“ Should Cameron be delivered to you,

will you withdraw your force? and through gratitude to the man who preserved the life of your chief, by deeds of pitying ——”

“Cameron will never be delivered to you,” said Fauconberg, in a tone that spoke generous determination — “so that parley upon the subject is useless; but the dead body of Ramirez shall be delivered to you, if you advance one ——”

At this moment, Albert, in his turn, was interrupted, and by an appalling interruption, in the voice of Ramirez, shouting like a demon to his legions:

“I am here! — I am with you! Give them no quarter!”

The contest now commenced; and it was fierce and terrible. Fauconberg fought like a Briton — like a Briton, whose own lion was now embodied in the man, who with the point of his sword opposed the numerous assailants, who were rapidly surmounting the inefficient barriers to attack him, against whom their fury was chiefly directed; since they felt him as their most formidable op-

ponent; for though his supporters were as valiant men as ever earned laurels in the field; and gratitude glowing in the heart of both impelled them to exertions for the preservation of Fauconberg, sufficient to burst their bands of life, yet they were both enervated by bodily suffering; and against odds so overwhelming, their efforts could not prove like his — resistless.

But such almost superhuman efforts could not have been long sustained; and Fauconberg felt that he must ultimately fall: yet he combated as if assured of victory; and whilst with invincible prowess he was driving back the redoubtable brigand Vasquez, a voice at his ear softly articulated:

“Escape from death is yet within your reach — fly to the cavern — your retreat shall be covered; fly! fly!”

“Never: no, never will I fly from a friend in peril,” was the spontaneous reply of the hero’s heart.

But Carlo at this critical moment seemed all at once to have imbibed sentiments widely

different from his noble master's; for this faithful and sagacious animal, that had fastened with resistless grasp upon the first assailant, suddenly relinquished his hold, as he started into a momentary pause, as if to listen; and then with a cry of joy, as wild as his movements now were rapid, he darted over bush and bramble, and rushed headlong down the crag: but scarcely had he disappeared, when the sound which had thus attracted him broke on Albert's ear in faintest tone; but the tone was true, for it struck on his heart, as the seraph's trump, sounding deliverance by the command of Heaven.

The sound became louder, and still louder, in the progress of rapid advance; and soon, in a momentary interval of the clang of warfare, distinctly were heard the clear notes of a bugle-horn, gaily restoring hope and joy to the almost exhausted force of this distressed garrison; for this herald sounded out substantial proof that could not be mistaken, in the national air — “The roast beef of Old Eng-

land!" the notes of which had often led poor Carlo to a tempting repast, whenever the situation of the army permitted the comfort of a regimental mess-room.

The banditti heard and acknowledged this herald too; and never perhaps did the approach of certain relief to any garrison operate with such instantaneous effect. The hand of determined sanguinary vengeance was in one moment stayed, as if by some sudden stroke of fate. A wild cry of, "The English army approaches!" ran through the dismayed horde; and ere a small detachment, commanded by ensign Marchmont, and led on by *general* Carlo, had, like a flock of the chamois, scaled the perpendicular rock into our little fortress, no trace of the banditti could be descried, save that of their blood, which had been shed by their brave opponents in their desperate self-defence; for now the advance of morn yielded sufficient light to recognise those who formed this providential rescue, and to ascertain the total disappearance of the panic-stricken ruffians.

But scarce one word of gratitude's warm greeting did the heart-wrung Albert pause to bestow upon his preserver, ere he rushed into the hut, to ascertain the fate of his brother; whom to his joyful surprise he there beheld; not a mangled corse, as he expected; but seated on his rushes, foaming with rage, that neither Cameron nor Dermod would answer his loud calls; trembling with alarm for the fate of his brother; and writhing in mortification that almost tortured him to frenzy, at the caitiff who had been left at his mercy, fettered hands and feet, having effected his miraculous escape.

Yet Rosstrevor had no cause for those feelings of mortification which so affected him, as the escape of Ramirez originated in no fault of his. It was the effect of a cause, with which Fauconberg was wholly unacquainted when he left him, in firm belief that he was securely manacled. But unfortunately the padlock of the dog's collar, though formed to lock with a key, yet opened by a spring; and in the restless fury of Ramirez, on

finding himself bound thus, as a victim to the safety of those whom he panted to annihilate, his waistcoat buttons came in contact with the spring; and in consequence the padlock unclosed, and dropped off. Warily he now disengaged himself from his handcuff, and watched the moment in which he might dare to venture on the bold enterprise he meditated.

The contest without at length commenced; the call for Cameron drew that noble-minded unfortunate forth, to save his friend, by the prompt surrender of himself; when upon Rosstrevor devolved the task of despatching the demon within, should necessity or self-defence demand the sacrifice. That moment of painful effort was seized by the observant captive, to sever with a pocket knife (which had escaped the detection of Fauconberg and Dermot), the rope which bound his legs; and with a desperate exertion for deliverance, he threw his coverlid with dexterity over Rosstrevor and the candle; extinguishing the latter, and trammelling the former, so as

to destroy his power of immediate action ; when, invigorated by the success of this first essay for escape, he found, like Cameron and Dermod, a transient accession of strength that bore him from the hut to join his horde, and turn the odds still more against poor Fauconberg and his brave supporters.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Marchmont and the corporal of the party he had led to this forlorn fortress, learned how imminent had been the peril from which they had so providentially rescued the distressed sufferers, they instantly pronounced upon the policy of immediate retreat; lest the vindictive brigands should discover how inconsiderable was the reinforcement, which had intimidated them from their sanguinary purpose.

“How are we to be removed?” demanded the impetuous Rosstrevor. “I cannot rise, much less walk; and therefore ——— Oh heaven! Albert bleeds! Alas! alas! what is to become of me, should this wound prove mortal?”

“My wound need not alarm you,” responded Fauconberg, whilst a thrill of fraternal joy sent a warm glow through his

affectionate heart, at this burst of interest for him ; even accompanied as it was by a selfish indication. “ It is merely a gash in my wrist from one of their long knives.”

Dermod now, in agonies for his master, even exhausted as he was, brought lint and a bandage to bind up Albert's wound ; an operation which drew the attention of the corporal upon the clothing of our three heroes ; when he pointed out how many had been their hair-breadth escapes from the bullets of their numerous assailants, more especially Fauconberg, who had fortunately taken his position where the luxuriance of the wood and foliage, and the jutting of a rock, had formed a complete rear-guard for their persons, and warded off the destructive aim of the banditti's fire.

Gustavus, convinced at length that his brother's wound was not one of danger, repeated his anxious questions relative to the mode of his own removal.

“ Why,” returned Marchmont, smiling, “ we Englishmen take forethought, as well

as impulse, for auxiliaries, when we set out to serve our friends. We have, therefore, brought a waggon, with necessary bedding for your conveyance; but which we were compelled to leave with a guard in the valley; for though in England they boast of flying waggons, we did not find ours equal to the aeronaut exploit of a soar up hither."

"Then let us be off," exclaimed Rosstrevor; "but whilst the few men you have brought are bearing me to the waggon, who is to aid in guarding us from these infernal bloodhounds?"

"The bugle will perform that duty," said Marchmont, laughing; "for the bloodhounds fled from its notes, as if it came to sound their last trump; and the roast beef of old England was too much for Spanish stomachs."

"Please your honours," said one of the soldiers, now appearing at the entrance of the hut, "we have fallen in with an unexpected reinforcement. Our two poor comrades, who were despatched some days ago by Mr. M'Duff, with supplies for Mr. Fauconberg; and who, it was thought, had deserted, were attacked

by robbers in this valley, rifled, and taken prisoners."

The two poor sufferers now appeared, stripped of their coats and all their military accoutrements, and corroborated the statement made by their comrade relative to them, adding:—

That late the preceding evening, one of the robbers cautiously entered the dungeon they were confined in, knocked off their fetters, and ordered them to follow him: they had done so a long way, to a sort of cave at the bottom of the crag, where he commanded them 'to remain till a British officer should join them; when he himself would return, and give them further instructions, with means to promote their certain escape.' But they had waited in vain. No British officer appeared to them, until the bugle's sound attracted them from the cave, to behold the joyful sight of a detachment from their own regiment.

The gratitude of Fauconberg to these poor fellows, for the sufferings and peril they had endured upon his account, was now called into

full glow ; nor was Cameron insensible to their claim upon his gratitude ; a debt which both young men endeavoured to repay, not only by pecuniary reward, but in various acts of future kindness. Indeed, not one of the brave soldiers engaged in this rescue found cause to complain of the generosity, or grateful remembrance of those whom they had delivered.

Prompt were the measures taken for the evacuation of Albert's hut, and rapid their adoption of them. Cameron, Rosstrevor, and Dermot, were tenderly borne on the shoulders of their brave deliverers to the waggon prepared for their conveyance ; but even wounded and exhausted as Albert was, he would not quit the scene of his severe conflicts and providential rescue, without performing those duties which his heart inspired.

The first were mental, the next active ; and both were executed without delay. His goat and his kid were restored to liberty, and with his wounded hand he contrived to write a few lines to his faithful friends, the gitana and the abbess of Santa Barbara : to the former offer-

ing recompense, and appointing the place where her application would be honoured : to the latter, a cautious billet, expressive of never-ending gratitude, and intimating his departure to join the army. The billet for the gitana he placed in a conspicuous position in the cave, where he doubted not of its being found by the friendly bandit, who would convey it to the sibyl, with whom it was evident he was on terms of perfect understanding ; whilst that for the abbess he once more braved the peril of an ascent to the ermita to deposit, and with which he left all that could be spared from the supplies brought by Marchmont, accompanied by the pilgrim's habit, which he feared might otherwise become a prize for the banditti, and possibly lead to unpleasant consequences to the monastery of Santa Barbara.

The necessary celerity of their flight from this valley allowed no moment for inquiry, how Marchmont had learned the supplies had not reached them from M'Duff ; or how he had been led to the providential rescue of those whom hope herself seemed to have forsaken.

Nor, indeed, until all were safely deposited in a comfortless *posada* in the wretched town of A——, could Fauconberg question Marchmont upon the matter : and when he found an opportunity of doing so, he was answered : —

“ Why faith, through something of that spirit of romance peculiar to this country,” said Marchmont.

“ Romance !” repeated Fauconberg, blushing, as his heart fluttered in anticipation.

“ Nay, do not blush about it, man,” returned Marchmont, “ for there was no romance of love in the case, at least so far as I know ; since the only one of the fair sex who appeared in the business was an old concern, who presented a nose resembling the chuck-full panniers of a travelling snuff-vender, and a pair of shrivelled cheeks resembling toasted cheese.”

“ This description certainly savours little of romance,” replied the disappointed Fauconberg ; “ but pray proceed, and tell me this romantic history, without any tropes and figures of rhetoric.”

“ But I know not how to tell my tale,” said Marchmont, gaily, “ if I must not embellish it, as you seem not to relish the plain features of my record in its opening. Faith, Fauconberg, it was well for your little garrison that I had proceeded no further on my march to rejoin our brigade than I have now advanced in my romantic story; for here in this place had I arrived; and at about this very hour, the night before last, had just pronounced in my own sapient mind, that bad was the best posada in A———; but, bad as I thought it, it possessed attractions to allure the pinnacle of Spanish pride to it, for his place of nocturnal repose.

“ Well, sir, Don Lucifer, and suite, were stalking in invisible grandeur through one of those dark passages which lead unwary travellers to the discomforts of a posada accommodation; when a great glare of light from the kitchen flashed on my uniform, as I was groping my way through the aforesaid passage, and my arm was suddenly and tremulously

grasped by a Spanish boy ; who, to my utter amazement, exclaimed in the pure English almost of a native : —

“ Heaven be praised, an officer of his very regiment ! Sir, you know Mr. Fauconberg ? ”

“ But, ere I could reply, the boy’s tremulous hand was roughly torn from resting on my arm, and he was hurried on, I knew not whither ; for as I wheeled round to pursue him for intelligence of you, I found my way impeded by a troop of mules, advancing in full trot, to seek the comforts of the posada kitchen.

“ Instantly I set about every inquiry relative to this boy ; whose voice and manner, and knowledge of English, had interested me beyond conception ; whilst his exclamation, and question about you, had awakened a degree of alarm that could not allow me to rest ; but not one syllable could I extract from one of the motley group I found in the kitchen ; not even from the mules themselves, by far the most intelligent animals I found in the assemblage.

“ My disappointment added poignancy to

my anxiety, and led to a determination of entering every apartment and compartment of the premises, with the ready excuse for my intrusion of 'a mistake of rooms;' and whilst I was endeavouring to procure a light, to aid in my penetration of a hidden subject, I was most unexpectedly accosted by an oldish woman, attired like a gitano, requesting a private conference.

"Instantly my active imagination embodied her as the sorceress, who had effected the vanishing of the interesting boy by surrounding me with her imps, transformed into mules to perplex me. However, anticipating some dire vindictive spell, if I complied not with her requisition; and now remembering the boy, too, wore this fantastic garb, I turned my tremulous steps into the room she invited me to enter; where, in an alarming *tête-à-tête*, she informed me, in a cautious whisper, of the dangers which encompassed you; adding, 'that your gallant arm had saved Don Something, Somewhat, Somebody, and his ward, Don Something else.' Had they been con-

tented with Wat Whiffin and Peter Prance for their appellatives, I could have remembered them for you ; but their sonorous string of hidalgo pomposities are a deuced deal too intricate for the retention of my pate. So, sir, this Don, and the other Don, you had at great peril to yourself rescued from giants of the mountain, or ogres of the glen ; and, therefore, Don Pridello (whose gratitude could not bear him through the condescension of personal communication) had permitted his ward, the boy I conclude, who was all heart and gratitude, to send this sibyl ‘ to entreat me to despatch without delay a party of our brave troops to rescue Mr. Fauconberg.’

“ Had the sibyl’s language corresponded with her garb, I would have treated all as a hoax, to entrap our men ; but her language, and her frankly owning her party were in disguise, to elude the recognition of the banditti, from whom they were flying, guaranteed her sincerity : added to which, the circumstantial account she gave of your situation ; great part of which she stated, as your own communication to the

superior of a monastery, from whence they had come that very morning, led me firmly to believe her. So, sir, I made the best of my way to the apartments of General De la Warr, who was fortunately in the posada, to impart to him all I had just heard; and to General De la Warr's prompt arrangements are you indebted for your rescue."

"No, Marchmont; it was to your animated friendship, your active humanity, we are indebted for our deliverance; not to the cold, calculating precision of General De la Warr," returned Albert, with emotion.

"Nay, Fauconberg, my man, this is not like yourself, to weigh the actions of brave and honourable men in the scales of prejudice," replied Marchmont, gravely. "But I have observed, on several occasions, that whilst General De la Warr was exerting himself to evince regard for you, you seemed to wince under his kindness: ay, on my life, sir, as if you would rather receive an injury from another man, than a good turn from General De la Warr. What can it mean, Fauconberg?"

“Some flaw in the texture of my gratitude, or at least in my conception of its effect,” returned Albert, with renovated composure. “But pray proceed with your narrative.”

“You have imbibed some misconception of the general’s mind,” returned Marchmont, warmly. “He cold ! he calculating ! I wish you had but seen him, sir, whilst arranging all things for your deliverance, with the promptitude of desperation. Had you been his own son, he could not have evinced more wild anxiety for your safety.”

“Indeed !” said Fauconberg, blushing, and in a tone expressive of surprise and subdued resentment. “Well, Marchmont, when I come up with the brigade, the general shall find no cause to suspect me of ingratitude.”

“Well, that is a good fellow,” replied Marchmont, shaking him by the hand. “And let me tell you, sir, I almost envied you the strong attachment the general betrayed for you in his alarm. He would have commanded our party himself, only he was under orders to join Lord Wellington ; and knowing

those retired habits which domestic griefs have led him into, you may well conceive his interest for you, when it led him to break into the intrenchments of pride, and present himself before the haughty Don, to make his anxious inquiries himself about your situation. But it was fortunate for your deliverance, my fine fellow, that the general had made all his arrangements ere he visited the Spaniard; for lo! he was so suddenly taken ill in this cave of Trophonius, that he was conveyed, in a sort of speechless mental suffering, from the Spaniard's to his own apartment; after that, he could see no one, but he promptly sent me an order to set out in search of you.

“Well, sir, under the auspices of a guide, strongly recommended by the *padre cura* of this town, I set forward with my party; but, the moment we approached the base of your stupendous mountains, our guide's apprehensions of the banditti preponderated over his good faith; for after announcing that an almost perpendicular ascent, to which he pointed, led to the defile which wound down into the valley we

sought, he miraculously disappeared; and after losing some time in a fruitless search for the miscreant, we left the waggon with a guard, and proceeded up the ascent without a guide; determined, when any crag appeared to answer the description given me by the Spanish dame of your perilous abode, to sound our bugle lustily.

“But most complex we found the way through the sublime, but often barren passes we explored to reach you. Sometimes high in air, elevating our hopes beyond the clouds; then suddenly sinking them to the very centre of gravity, by an apprehended approach to regions where there might be danger of getting into scrapes, for tripping up the heels of the antipodes; till, mazed and bewildered in the vast romantic track, night fell on us, when the dangers of our march presented the necessity of halting. So, not having ascertained whether there were a chance for us, of our lion hearts becoming *bons-bons* for wolves, in that lonely wild; and fear of the banditti's

overwhelming numbers interdicting fires, we scrambled into the luxuriant trees around, to bivouac; but scarcely had the morning dawned, when we were aroused from our nests by the sound of musketry, at no great distance.

“ Guessing the fact, alarm for you all sent us forward with incredible activity; but such a meandering had dame nature here made in her ways, that sound no longer proved an unerring guide; for when, by a new turn, we conceived ourselves making to the point from whence the firing issued, the next confounded turn convinced us we had wandered wide of the mark. At length, in this wild goose-chase perpetually foiled, our bugle announced a dish from old England, which we conjectured would sound into your senses incontestable proofs that some beef-eaters were at hand; and draw either a signal light from your garrison, or inspire you with perseverance in combat, secure that a reinforcement was approaching. And most fortunate proved our selection of a harbinger, for almost in-

stantaneously was Alderman Carlo attracted by it, to become a faithful guide to you ; and without whose prompt aid, our excursion to that fearful region would have proved to little purpose."

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN at length the party were safely lodged in the hospital belonging to their brigade, the skill of M'Duff was evinced by the speedy recovery of Dermod. The wounds of Cameron and Rosstrevor were also cured; but one received by Fauconberg in the valley of his dangerous adventures, defied all the surgical skill of this son of Esculapius; for the fascinations of the interesting Alvina seemed indelibly engraven on his heart; whilst the painful remembrance that she was unhappy, and that it was too probable her affections were pre-engaged, weighed heavily on his heart; and perceptibly depressed those buoyant spirits which had hitherto animated every look and action.

But the warfare in Spain was not calculated to nurture the romance of love. Men had there the fate of nations to engage their mind

— the stake for life, or death, to occupy their thoughts ; and in the career of brilliant glory Heaven there marked out for our brave troops, the brigade, to which our sufferers of the hut were attached, bore a distinguished part ; so that from this fatal plunge into the gulf of hopeless love, which thus had menaced him, Fauconberg at length believed himself happily rescued by want of time to woo that misery which his reason vainly pointed out as inevitable, were he to persevere in cherishing an inauspicious passion for Alvina.

Yet though the clang and horror of battles and sieges, the groans of the wounded, the wail for the dead, and the continued shout of victory, had so far thrown their shadows over the lovely image of Alvina, that the prudence of Fauconberg had long hailed the belief of the perfect subjugation of his romantic passion, his approach to Madrid dissipated this delusion ; and poor prudence, in dismay, once more beheld her lawful niche in the mind of Albert occupied by Alvina. For when that approach revived his hope of seeing her, his

passion was rekindled by that hope, and with joy almost unbounded he at last found himself in the very haven of his wishes.

His heart had registered the direction given to him by the abbess of Santa Barbara to the banker, Senor Felix, in the street of Alcala, "who was either to conduct him to Alvina, or give him her address." To make verbal inquiries for the idol of his heart's homage in the hearing of he knew not whom, he felt would be degrading to her delicacy; he therefore committed them to paper in an address to Senor Felix; and after a reasonable lapse of time, in which each moment appeared a day, and each hour an age to Fauconberg, he called for an answer, and received, enclosed in a polite note from Senor Felix, two billets of different dates, yet both some weeks prior to the period in which they were delivered.

First Billet.

"It is probable that long ere these lines reach the hand of Alvina's preserver, seas will divide her from him; but even vast as they

may prove, their mightiest waves can never efface the debt of gratitude she owes to the gallant and humane Senor Fauconberg, from the remembrance of

“ALVINA.”

Billet the Second, written in English.

“—— FAUCONBERG, Esq.

“With joy I have this moment learned from Marcella that the aid, which the fugitives your valour and humanity saved from death proved the means of directing to you, arrived in time for your deliverance.

“If my share in this effort to save you from peril can lay claim to some correspondent service, give it to me where my heart will bless you for it; and should a brave soldier in your intrepid army, named Xavier Almedina, ever cross your path when danger menaces him in battle, oh! let your valour turn it from him, and preserve him for the sake of the poor exile,

“ALVINA.”

Fauconberg possessed sufficient command

over his feeling to refrain from reading the banker's packet until he returned to his lodgings; and fortunate proved this restraint upon his impatience, for the billets it contained nearly subdued him by grief and despair: grief for this disappointment of every hope of again beholding Alvina, and despair from the conviction thus presented of her heart being devoted to another, to this Xavier Almedina; he who, by her guardian's intimation, had been the destroyer of her happiness.

Fate had so ordained that Cameron, now recovered from his wounds, was an inmate in the same quarters with Albert; and led by his sense of obligation to him, from that unvanquishable reserve which marked his manner to all beside, often entered the apartment of Fauconberg with the familiarity of genuine friendship; and shortly after this overwhelming tide of grief and despair had almost subjugated the fortitude of the hopeless lover, Cameron stood before him, gazing on him with a countenance beaming such eloquence of heart-felt sympathy, that poor Albert could not resist it; and the

ingenuousness of his nature led him to the acknowledgment “ of a hopeless passion having thus subdued his firmness.”

Cameron, nearly ten years Albert’s senior, felt deeply apprehensive for his young friend, thus in a foreign country, surrounded by women of no common fascinations, lest some insidious lures might have been spread to entrap him ; and in the zeal of his anxious friendship entreated further confidence, when Fauconberg, feeling that compliance would yield relief to his heart, commenced without hesitation the narrative of his adventures in the valley.

Even agitated as Fauconberg himself was, he soon perceived that the interest which Cameron took in his narrative was intense ; with amazement he saw it gradually becoming painful, agonizing ; beheld his ever pale countenance assume something of the hue of death ; saw his frame convulsed by agitation, and, as he closed the history of his inauspicious love by reading Alvina’s second billet, he heard a

deep groan burst from the lips of Cameron, who dropped from his chair to the ground in a state of total insensibility.

The conflict which now agitated the mind of Fauconberg seemed to threaten the subjugation of his faculties also, for he doubted not that in the mysterious Cameron he beheld Xavier Almedina ; he who had won the young affections of the artless Alvina ; “ the thorn that rankled in Alvina’s happiness ; ” and though recoiling from him, whom he pronounced a monster, he summoned aid to place him on a couch, and to administer restoratives to recall those senses which he believed had been chased by the pangs of an accusing conscience.

At length Cameron revived, but it was a revival that seemed to indicate some fatal termination to his mental sufferings ; and drew Fauconberg to his side, with pity for the man he no longer believed deserving of esteem.

Cameron felt that it was necessary to convey him to his bed, and gave orders for having his

chamber immediately prepared ; but ere his removal, he desired to have a few moments' private conference with Fauconberg.

“ Fauconberg,” said Cameron, and though in the tremulous tones of internal anguish, yet with the most touching impressiveness, “ I feel convinced that I shall now be consigned to a bed of sickness, from which it may please the All-merciful that I may never arise. It is, therefore, probable these may prove our last moments of confidential communication, and in them I conjure you, as you prize your happiness, to exterminate this passion for _____”

“ I presume,” said Fauconberg, impatiently interrupting him, “ that it is Don Xavier Alinedina I have the honour of seeing before me?”

“ Sir, you see Mr. Cameron before you,” responded the agitated man, in tones that thrilled in horror to the benevolent heart of Fauconberg, they sounded so incontestably despair.

“ Sir, you see before you Mr. Cameron,”

he continued in a voice less appalling, but even yet more affecting; “ he whom you saved from the vengeance of Ramirez at the peril of your own life; and can that life’s happiness be to him an object of indifference? But I feel I must be brief, ere malady subdues my power, to importune you to exterminate your passion for Alvina; since there exist barriers to the auspiciousness of that passion too invincible to be overthrown. Yes, my friend, fair, and pure, and sweet as Lady Alvina is, you must, for the preservation of your own happiness, endeavour to forget her.”

The voice of Cameron now faltered into a cadence so low that the tone became almost inaudible, for sickness was rapidly subduing him; and the heart-wrung Fauconberg, with all the humanity of his nature, allowed not one unnecessary moment to intervene ere he had him, whom he believed his successful rival in the affections of Alvina, established in his bed, and M’Duff in attendance.

The malady of poor Cameron too soon

evinced itself in a brain fever, the effect of mental suffering, as the wild incoherence of his ravings proclaimed to all around him ; but as none of his attendants were acquainted with the nature of his griefs, none could connect the verbal testimonies of his delirium into any illustration of the mysteries which encompassed him except poor Fauconberg, who firmly believed it was the inauspicious frown of fate upon the loves of Cameron and Alvina that had now caused a temporary subjugation of his mind ; and though the pangs were poignant which writhed the heart of Fauconberg, he omitted nothing that he had power to execute for the comforts of his rival in his sickness, or to promote his restoration to mental and bodily health.

But whilst humanity led Fauconberg thus to attend to Cameron in his malady, he was not unmindful of the fascinating cause of his own misery and of Cameron's. He remembered but too well the information of his gitano friend relative to Lady Alvina, and which seemed to imply that some of her

sorrows were to be ascribed to the austerity of her guardian. Her billet, too, seemed to intimate the influence of some arbitrary power, that was bearing her against her wishes to some far distant clime; and though aware that he could afford no mitigation of her suffering or her griefs whilst she was in another country, yet, through the intervention of the abbess of Santa Barbara, he hoped some alleviation to her sorrows might be effected.

To the banker, Senor Felix, he turned his sanguine thoughts, and lost no time in calling on him; but though he found him polite and conciliating, as all the Madrilenos* were to our brave army, Fauconberg could obtain no information from him in any form, not even her family name: and on his honour he affirmed, "that the billets he had conveyed to him had come into his hands as an enclosure from the abbess of Santa Barbara."

But relative to the interesting abbess, he found Senor Felix much more communicative, and perfectly ready and willing to convey any

* Natives of Madrid.

letters or packets to the unfortunate recluse. Of this readiness Albert availed himself by sending a letter of grateful kindness to her, in which he deplored the bitterness of his disappointment; on finding that Lady Alvinā was removed to a country unknown to him; for that he had nothing more at heart than to render her any service that might mitigate her sorrows. And not only did Albert profess gratitude to the interesting abbess in words, but evinced it in other tokens, which Senor Felix kindly conveyed for him to Santa Barbara.

It had never entered into the purpose of Fauconberg to avail himself of the address to the banker Don Pedro Ariol given him by Don Ferdinand, since the ingenuous hidalgo had informed him "he would not introduce him to his family;" but his disappointment at the Senor Felix's overcame all repugnance to the measure; and in defiance of indignant recollections, led him to the mansion of Don Pedro, with inquiries for Don Ferdinand de Verodia.

This banker he found even more courteous than Senor Felix, for he evinced the most animated solicitude to pay him every flattering attention, "not only," he said, "through gratitude to him as a succouring ally, but by the express desire of Don Ferdinand de Verodia; who had, ere he quitted Spain, regretted much that his absence from his country would prevent his evincing in person, how he appreciated his obligations to Senor Fauconberg."

In his reply, Fauconberg requested the present address of Don Ferdinand, but this Don Pedro candidly confessed he was not at liberty to disclose.

"But this far I may venture to impart to a senor who has borne so distinguished a part in rescuing Don Ferdinand from the sanguinary agents of a villain," continued Don Pedro, "that his route is impenetrable, to veil it from the knowledge of a miscreant, who has vowed the total extirpation of the whole race of Verodia, having already fulfilled his menace of the destruction of their happiness."

Foiled too in this attempt to obtain intel-

ligence of the destination of Alvina, all that Fauconberg had it in his power to effect relative to her was, to become reconciled to her departure from Spain, as it was evidently adopted by her guardian effectually to secure her from the machinations of the diabolical Ramirez.

The call of glory at length summoned Albert from Madrid, ere the recovery of poor Cameron from his mental alienation had been indicated by any auspicious symptom. The fever was indeed subdued, but his mind continued under the dominion of the most touching melancholy; and never could Fauconberg seat himself by the couch of this interesting sufferer to behold the desolation which too much sensibility had caused, without shedding drops of genuine sympathy, and mastering every jealous pang which rivalry could engender.

Three months elapsed, after the departure of Albert from Madrid, before Cameron was pronounced by his medical attendants sufficiently convalescent to take the field; and pale and emaciated, and bearing in form and face the

most piteous testimony of what had been his sufferings, he once more joined the detachment in which Albert was enrolled.

The very first moment opportunity was afforded to him, on finding Fauconberg alone, Cameron eagerly seized it, as if anxiously to say all that his heart was full of. But feeling was too strong for him. He caught the hand of Fauconberg, looked intently on him, and in that look was legible volumes of apology for words; for it told of wretchedness that language could not utter. He then pressed the hand of Fauconberg against his own throbbing heart, and, bursting into an agony of tears, retreated. From that hour the care was visible which he took to avoid even one moment of private conference with Fauconberg, who no sooner perceived that such was the wish of this miserable man, than it became his sedulous care on his part to avoid what he feared might add to Cameron's afflictions.

Yet Fauconberg kept a wary, but unobtrusive eye upon poor Cameron; watching occasions to render him services, some of

moment, some trifling in themselves, yet such as contributed to his comforts; such as he believed Alvina, in her gentle affection, would herself have performed for the man she loved; never for a moment forgetting the misery he had seen Cameron subdued by; nor that, when she had destroyed his own hopes, his rival had been recommended to his care by the pen of that too fascinating being.

But though Cameron on his part withdrew from former social intercourse with his sympathizing friend, yet want of gratitude bore no part in this afflicting estrangement; for, more than once, when the enthusiasm of Fauconberg's valour had led him beyond the boundary of prudence, Cameron was seen, as a second Dermody, hazarding his own life with the wildest rashness, to extricate Albert from the overpowering numbers of the enemy.

At length that climax to victory's splendid career, which sheathed the sword of warfare, after more than twenty years of direful carnage, closed the military achievements of our countrymen; when neither Fauconberg nor March-

mont having means conveniently to bear them home to visit their connexions, they breathed no murmur at detention amongst old foes, now transformed into new allies. But with unfeigned regret Fauconberg found the destination of Cameron was to be at some distance from his own; so that during their long inactive stay in France they had rarely met, until drawn together to the coast to re-embark for their native country; when Fauconberg would have told his friend, had he questioned him upon the subject, "That the tender attachment his heart had cherished for Alvina was at length subdued, leaving only the interest of friendship and the tenderness of pity in its place:" whilst, on the contrary, Albert feared he should not receive the same assurances from Cameron, were he even to hazard the putting such interrogation to him; as his countenance seemed to tell more touchingly than ever, that in his heart was still cherished the disease which had for a time shaken his brain, and had traced on his whole aspect the legible character of internal desolation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE battalion to which Cameron, Fauconberg, and Marchmont belonged, we have introduced to our readers on its march from Dover; we have now only to say, that it promptly reached its place of temporary destination, where the wishes of those clamorous patriots, who would not sacrifice one of their home comforts, or even luxuries, for those who had toiled and bled for the preservation of their country, were gratified without one moment of delay, by the reduction of many a gallant corps, and hundreds of brave men sent forth in the face of winter's rigour to seek for means to earn subsistence.

But we do not mean to enter upon what is not within our province, nor to argue respecting the expediency of a measure so painful to the best feelings of a Briton's heart; we only touch upon the subject from its effect upon five indi-

viduals, whose reduction at that period gave birth to the pages which form these volumes.

With "the birth, parentage, life, character, and behaviour of Albert Fauconberg" our readers are already acquainted; but of Cameron's it must have been yet only conjecture; nor are we at liberty at present to withdraw the veil that renders him mysterious.

Of Ensign Marchmont, although introduced into our scene of action, nothing yet has transpired. In exterior he was prepossessing, in temper amiable, in heart excellent, in spirit brave, and, in despite of misfortune, lively and pleasing in his manners.

At the period in which his services to his country had thus ended in reduction, Marchmont had just entered his twenty-first year; yet he had distinguished himself in every affair in which the troops had been engaged from Badajoz to Waterloo, a career of glory upon which he had been thrown by adverse circumstances at the early age of fifteen.

Marchmont's father, though a man of large possessions, had first entered the pale of

matrimony with an heiress, whose guardians were strict, and rapacious in their demands relative to settlements; and either through indolence, or a wish to establish the disinterestedness of his attachment to his wealthy mistress, the young lover submitted all things to their management.

From this marriage sprung one child — a son; and in process of time, Mr. Marchmont became a disconsolate widower; yet still so enamoured of connubial life, that he determined upon a second choice; and lest death should a second time plunge him into affliction, he calculated upon the odds of forty-three years difference in age, and offered his hand to a beautiful girl of seventeen; the younger of the daughters of the clergyman who had been preceptor to his son.

It was not an easy task to win the young and beautiful Sophia Sidney to smile auspiciously upon a suitor, whose son she would have considered a much more appropriate wooer; but the wishes of her parents — a coach and four — a house in Portland Place — a magni-

ficent mansion in Derbyshire — a noble settlement for herself and eventual offspring; and above all, the generous offer of presenting her own small portion to her beloved sister, prevailed; and Sophia became the bride of Mr. Marchmont, but not a happy wife: disparity of years led the demon of jealousy to find shelter in the bosom of her husband, who, to enchain her affections, confined her chiefly to her house, as the nurse of a pretended valetudinarian; scarcely permitting her to hold intercourse with her amiable sister (twelve years her senior), who had been bereaved of her excellent parents, and the comforts of a father's house, in a very short period after the marriage of Sophia; who had vainly hoped an asylum would have been offered to that dear sister in her house. But, unfortunately, Mr. Marchmont had a strong antipathy to long pale faces. A long pale face was the gift of nature to Miss Sidney, and dutiful attendance upon many relatives in sickness had aggravated this disqualification for the esteem of Mr. Marchmont, who could

so seldom achieve the exploit of being even commonly civil to Miss Sidney, when the favour was granted of permission to spend a day in the prison of her uncomplaining idol Sophia, that after many struggles with her affection for her sister and her lovely offspring, a girl and boy, she at length accepted the often repeated invitation of an attached school friend, to share the luxuries of her affluence at her residence in Wales.

At length Mrs. Marchmont beheld her daughter shoot forth her expanding leaves into a burst of beauty; which, with maternal exultation surmounting personal vanity, she pronounced surpassing even what she herself had boasted. Mr. Marchmont, too, beheld his daughter's charms with pride, which kindled his ambition into such a flame of hope and expectation, that all at once he laid aside his ill-health that he might attend his daughter's presentation at court; which he doubted not would lead to a connexion with the superlative of our nobility.

Mr. Marchmont's anticipations soon were

in full promise. A young Marquis offered his coronet, and was accepted; but when pecuniary arrangements came to be discussed, the young lover frankly acknowledged, “that he could not lead a bride to the altar, who did not bear in her hand at least thirty thousand pounds.” This unexpected declaration occasioned some demurs; when Sidney Marchmont, the hero of our present episode, then nearly fourteen, and at home for a school vacation, stepped forward to importune his father to give up his intention of making the portions of his children equal.

“You can share the forty thousand pounds settled on younger children as you please,” said the generous boy — “for you have often told me so, when I have been idle, or wanted mamma to go out with me; therefore you can let Maria have thirty thousand pounds, and then you know, my having only ten to look to, may lead me to find attractions in the cramp profession you intend me for, and make me a diligent pacer through its mazes, till I earn my soft repose upon the woolsack.”

This generous proposition was acceded to by the ambitious father, and every preparation for the nuptials of Miss Marchmont set in train; when one day, after a long absence from the apartments of his wife and daughter, Mr. Marchmont entered in much agitation to announce to the latter, “that her treaty of marriage was ended, and her lover gone to arrange for a tour to Germany.”

In vain did the heart-wrung Maria, and her sympathizing mother, importune for information of the cause of so unexpected a blight to all her hopes of happiness; but whilst Mr. Marchmont thus appeared inexorable to tears and supplications, he suddenly dropped from his chair, apparently without life; and vain proved mortal skill and tenderness, for, after a few hours of speechless existence, he expired.

But too soon came a bitter solution to this melancholy mystery; for when Sidney returned from his father’s magnificent interment in Derbyshire, the unconscious boy was unfeelingly made the bearer of a letter

from his brother, to inform his mother, “ that in consequence of his approaching nuptials, he must trouble her to quit his town residence as soon as convenient for her.”

The family solicitor was promptly summoned to explain, if he could, the mystery of this mandate, as the town residence had been bequeathed to her ; and the solution was given in the stunning blow, which confirmed beyond all doubt, that her late husband had possessed not only no power to bequeath his personals to his widow, but none, at the time he married her, to make any settlement upon her or her progeny ; since all that he did possess at the period of his first marriage, with all that he might ever possess, or become entitled to inherit, were incontestably secured to the offspring of the first marriage ; but whether the late Mr. Marchmont was, or was not aware of this, when he caused the arrangements for his subsequent union to be made, this lawyer was unable to explain.

However, he who was proved sole heir to all his late father’s vast possessions, now, to

shield his mother's family from censure for rapaciousness, when unrestrained confidence had been placed in their honour, roundly asserted, "that his father was not in ignorance of the force of his first marriage settlements, when he lured the young mercenary by a fallacious bait; and that even his bequest was but an artifice to shield himself from suspicion." But, however the fact was, Mrs. Marchmont and her children were unexpectedly hurled from the lap of affluence into the iron grasp of ruthless poverty; for, as the selfish heir could claim all, he took all of his late father's property, even to the cash he found in the house at the period of his demise; and refusing aid on any point to the almost heart-broken widow, she found herself compelled to the necessity of disposing of the few trinkets which were unquestionably her own, to enable her to descend from affluence to penury, unencumbered by debt; and in a small lodging in Lambeth, she promptly established herself and children;

her paraphernalia being all the property she possessed for their support.

In this miserable seclusion she was found by her sister, who had travelled night and day from Glamorganshire, as soon as she obtained intelligence of the sad finale to her beloved Sophia's splendid alliance; not once pausing on the ruin of her own interests, by mortally offending the friend she was thus quitting.

The first act of Mrs. Clarinda Sydney, after her arrival in London, was to refund the fortune of her sister, which Mr. Marchmont had presented to her; and fortunate was the arrangement of it previous to his marriage, for had he ever possessed it, his heir would have demanded it. The next step taken by Mrs. Clarinda Sydney was, to establish herself in the same lodgings with her sister, on the condition of paying the moiety of their united expenditure; and her next, to make application to every being, from whom her own family could on any pretence solicit

a favour, to obtain some situation for poor Sydney ; whose prospects had been so cruelly blighted in the abundant blossoms of his expectations. At length, an ensigncy was presented to him by one of those friends, when his three female relatives strained every nerve to fit him out respectably, and cheerfully entered upon every deprivation, to yield a small allowance to aid his pay, in the necessary expenses of a gentleman.

During his very short sojourn at the depôt of his regiment in England, this very young soldier was compelled, though with the most bitter feelings of reluctance, to accept this aid ; but from the moment he entered Spain, he not only refused all further assistance, but out of his own limited means, sent them little tokens of his remembrance ; nor did it awaken any discordant sensations in the bosom of his mother, or his sister, when they found amongst those proofs of his affection, that those for aunt Clara were ever the most curious and most costly.

The next individual on our list for introduction is Sir Frederick Bolingbroke, a baronet of twenty-seven; of high descent, of polished manners, of fine exterior, and of whose heart we will present his own actions as the testimony.

Sir William Bolingbroke, the father of Sir Frederick, succeeded to the title and estates of his ancestors at the early age of nine years; and from this long minority, and the judicious management of careful guardians, Sir William, when he became of age, found himself master of possessions which he pronounced exhaustless. Under this belief, and unrestrained by prudence, he entered at once into a wild ungoverned career of prodigality, that led to every species of embarrassment; and eventually terminated in his dying overwhelmed in debt, without any fund to liquidate it, but in the honour of his only son. To that son this improvident father had been inexpressibly dear; and he would allow no censure to rest upon his parent's memory, which his own

privations could remove; and instantly after he came into possession of the property which devolved to him by succession, Sir Frederick sought out proper agents, to whose management he consigned his whole revenue for a certain term of years, for the benefit of his father's creditors; reserving to himself the purchase money of an ensigncy of foot, with an estate of about three hundred per annum for his own expenses; and thus sacrificing to filial piety and love of justice the pomp and affluence he might have retained; and with them, every hope of domestic blessings in early life.

Sir Frederick Bolingbroke did not commence his military career until our victorious army was upon the point of entering France, and at Orthès he was first initiated in the pangs of glory; for there he was wounded severely; but, by judicious treatment, soon after recovered in time to engage in that brief but decisive contest, which sheathed the sword of conquest: and, still a subaltern in the same battalion with Cameron, Fauconberg, and

Marchmont, he proceeded to the place of their reduction.

The last of the disbanded subalterns we have now to present to our readers, is a veteran of forty, whose misfortune, not his fault, it was, being found so low in rank, upon the termination of so long and sanguinary a warfare.

Lieutenant Nettlethorp was one of the younger sons of a professional man of great respectability in London; but, unfortunately for him, though a fine martial-looking man, he did not boast of that remarkable beauty which nature had lavished on his two brothers and his sisters; nor were his manners of that pleasing cast, likely to conciliate those unacquainted with the integrity of his heart; for this absence of family fascinations awakened towards him an unnatural antipathy in the bosom of his own mother; who, possessing unbounded influence over the mind of his father, exerted her power for the horrid purpose of weaning his paternal affection from his unoffending child.

Although the manners of Francis Nettlethorp were blunt and unpolished, his heart was susceptible of the most delicate and tender sensibility; and the estrangement of affection, which he discovered in all around him, struck deep into his wounded bosom; and subsequently led him to importune his father for a commission in some regiment on foreign service, that he might fly from the tortures of a home, where all things told him he was pronounced an alien.

Nature had not, however, proved herself so very partial in the distribution of her favours to this family, as the exterior of poor Frank seemed to argue; for though she had given him less personal attraction than his brothers, she had indemnified him with a much superior share of intellect; and this evident superiority led his father to the wish of bringing him up to his own profession, that of a chamber counsel; and to place his brace of beauties in some more conspicuous situations, where exterior would compensate for talent: but Mrs. Nettlethorp would not hear of his being reared

for a profession, which would doom her to his society.

But at length a country cousin, not in the family secrets, forming one of a large dinner party at Mr. Nettlethorp's, observed, most untowardly, before the company, — “that of all her children, Frank was the only one who resembled Mrs. Nettlethorp;” and, from that very hour, Mrs. Nettlethorp became as anxious as poor Frank himself to obtain an establishment in the army for him, that should secure her nerves from the shock of ever hearing more of such an annoying resemblance.

All now was rapidly arranged for the departure of the young soldier to join his regiment, at the commencement of the long contest with France; and from that period he saw a great deal of service, until he was unfortunately taken by the French; and for eight years he remained a prisoner of war, his promotion being not only suspended during that long period, but the gloom and privations of captivity augmenting by the unkindness of his relatives. No remittances — no letters from

home, appeared to yield one cheering ray of comfort to his dreary captivity.

At length the successes of the allies restored him to liberty; and, in 1814, he once more returned to England. As his native country appeared in view, his memory losing all recollection of unkindness, he flew to his father's house on the wings of warm affection; but there no smiles of welcome greeted him. His father had paid his debt to nature; his eldest brother, without nerves for the army, had found it expedient to retire from the service; now, almost disgraced, and without profession, vegetating on the small funded property his father had bequeathed him; his youngest brother toiling hard to earn a mere subsistence; and with whom his mother and sister lived, in fallen state and fallen comforts.

Francis soon learned how trifling had been the legacy bequeathed to him; but even that, his mother unfeelingly told him, was more than he deserved. "I wish, madam," he replied, "that for my sisters' sake, it had been more; as to them I give it, and now bid you farewell

for ever:" and, with an almost bursting heart, he hastened from her to rejoin his regiment. After the battle of Waterloo he was promoted to a lieutenancy in the corps with our already mentioned subalterns; and in which he remained to meet that reduction, which threw him on the world without a competence.

CHAPTER XVII.

INDEPENDENTLY of the five individuals with whom, if our readers do not weary of them on the way, they may yet travel some hundred pages, there were, of course, many others belonging to the same corps reduced : but these had either a home of their own to return to, or opulent friends to receive them ; and their minds being free of care for the morrow, they departed with light hearts, and without delay, to their respective destinations.

Not so our five poor friends. All before them was gloom and doubt ; without one bright beam of light in hope's perspective, to cheer the dreary day of winter that first arose on their fallen fortunes.

From the mess-room dinner of the preceding day, served upon plate, and composed of every luxury ; where, whilst the sparkling wines of

France were circulating in flowing bumpers, toasting old commanders — foreign beauties to be seen no more, and vows of friendship to each other, their martial band sounding the response in appropriate air or favourite melody — from all this pomp and luxury, and jovial feeling, our five brave soldiers had, in twenty-four hours, transmigrated to a sanded parlour in a miserable public-house, designated, as it should seem in burlesque, the Imperial Crown; for the ruby-faced landlady, who long had considered her dignity superlative in being mistress of the Rose and Crown, raised it to imperial rank upon the Emperor of Russia having graciously smiled upon her, in his route from Petworth to Dover; and where they now, with the mournful howling of the wind through the rattling casements, sending forth melancholy contrast to the sweet accompaniment of former banquets, upon a dish of candle-flavoured mutton chops, and sloe juice mingled with steel filings for beverage, were endeavouring to achieve their last meal to-

gether, ere they mounted the different coach-roofs that were so shortly, as they believed, to separate them perhaps for ever.

At length their dishes were removed, not very visibly diminished by their attempts to dine, and they all drew their ranks closer to the fire; and were endeavouring to persuade their lips to admit the beverage before them, when Marchmont exclaimed, after a loud howl of the jarring elements: "Upon honour, my late worthy brother soldiers, I shall scarcely find vocal firmness to sing out, 'Let us take the road;' the night sings out such bitter lamentations for the departed spirit of our poor regiment. It seems really to justify some awkward anticipations of being treated with a broken neck, by a somerset from a coach top."

"Well," cried Nettlethorp, "and would not a dislocated neck, come honestly by, be an acceptable provision? It would suit me to a tittle, now my bonds and my services have been rewarded by a *carte blanche* upon the exchequer of starvation."

"There will, through this reduction," said Marchmont, "be a pretty hard run upon that same exchequer; enough to sink its credit."

"Ay, to perdition!" returned Nettlethorp, with vehemence; "and perdition ought to be the fate of ——."

"Halt in time, Netley, my pungent fellow," exclaimed Marchmont, gaily; for even the hopelessness of his situation could not wholly subdue the volatility of his spirits: "Halt, I say, ere your extempores lead you to the verge of treason."

"Treason!" repeated Nettlethorp, with strong emotion: "treason, Mr. Marchmont! No, sir, no. Though I feel most poignantly, that I, with many fellow sufferers, have been d—lishly ill used, no treason shall ever defile my lips; and the man who should have the temerity to utter treasons in my hearing, as my sword is sheathed, I should, in civil usage, hurl through the window."

"Nettlethorp resembles some men with their wives," said Sir Frederick Bolingbroke, with a languid smile; "he takes the liberty of

finding every fault with his country himself, but will submit to no such liberty in others."

At this moment Dermod appeared, to inform his master "that the coach was arrived, and not a place vacant, either within or without."

"And that same is luck to your honour," continued Dermod, "for the coach will be overturned twenty times, I'll engage, before it arrives safe in London; for the guard says, it was a hard matter to cross the bridge, up yander, beyant; bekease the waters have risen so high, that it stands a fair chance of being swept away; and then not a coach, not so much as a donkey cart, will be able to come on; and faith, no blame to them for that same, whin the road before them has disappeared."

"Pleasant intelligence," exclaimed Nettlethorp, "and all of a piece. Then, in this infernal place we must remain, as the first earnest of starvation; unless we swim off, in quest of better quarters."

"No need of that, neither, gemmen!" exclaimed Mrs. Adolphus, the landlady, who

had closely followed Dermod into the room, to learn what commands awaited her, in consequence of the pre-occupation of the coach : “ no need to seek better quarters, gemmen ; for no better can be found no where, than the Imperial Crown affords to gentry as is going to stay. This here is the stage coach perch ; but I has the genteelest of rooms upstairs, with the Emperor Alexander’s picture in it. It was engaged when you gemmen came down from the barracks, and the change of dress made me not to discern you was officers as was ; till your man, sir,” curtsying to Sir Frederick, “ said as you was an old barren knight : and your man, your reverence,” curtsying profoundly to Fauconberg, “ said as you were a late Irish bishop. So, please to step upstairs, gemmen ; you will find the very best of commodation, a billard table and every thing, and excellent beds, and the neatest of wines ; and no better larder no where, as you would have knowed to your cost — that is, I means, to mine — for I never minds being out of pocket, for the pride of providing the

best of every thing for the Imperial Crown; and all this you would have knowed, gemmen, had that there deduction been put off, just to let you see what elegant commodations, and every thing, the Imperal Crown produces. I'll fetch the bill of fare, gemmen, that I may have the honour to prepare supper for you; none of your scraps from other tables; but first provided for you, as I fears you fared but poorly at your dinner; but the way of that was, our cook, a capital one, went home to visit a sick father, as she said; for servants are such meritorious liars, and such plagues, never easy but when gadding and deceiving one: so our kitchen-maid, a new hand, who pretends to know 'bout every thing, she cooked your dinners, and made but a poor hand on it, as I finds; but Susan cook is comed back, in high feather; for her father, poor man, is better, and she now has a heart for cooking famously. Five beds, gemmen, you'll require. In the morning, I said, I could not commodate you with one; but the grand famly for whom they were engaged, who always frequents

the Imperial Crown, have been retained by the weather, which proves fortunate for you gentlemen, as it gives you such capital commodiations, rained down and blowed on you, as my good man says, ha! ha! ha! for he dearly loves to joke. The beds are well haired, I'll assure you. Bless my eyes! what do I see! a villanous mistake! wine of a wrong vintage, not yet fit for drinking. Oh, monscus! such fools to deal with; and so one's house gets an ill name, when one haves the neatest wines in our rapacious cellar as you could turn a waggon and nine in; ay, wines as pure and undul-treated as our beer: port fifteen, ay twenty days—years I mean, in bottle. You shall have a bottle of our very best canted in one minute, and served by a nice fire upstairs for you. Lauk! lauk! how provoking this mistake about the wine! As sure as my name is Dolphus, it was all along of that noodle, Sam Waiter, never knowing fish from flesh. Ay, the moment one sets up a inn like the Imperial Crown, one ought to have eyes for twenty folks."

“ And tongues for forty, I perceive, madam,” said Nettlethorp.

“ Oh, lauk ! yes, sir, and ears too by dozens. But pray walk this way, gemmen, and allow me the honour of lighting you. Foh ! how comed such vulgar candles here ? Lauk ! lauk ! what would the Emperor Alexander the Great say, if he knowed such a pair of vulgarities were laid afore an old barrenknight and a latebishop in my house. But pray mind your footing, gemmen ; your reverence take care, and don’t be so nimble : five steps there, four here ; and now one little corner, one there. Foh ! how the baccar fumes up from the tap-room ! It must be quite defensive to you, gemmen ; but them there vulgar shay-boys and smugglers, and such-like below, have no high-days for poll-lightness, but leaves the communiking door open ; and for that matter it may be the servants ; a lazy pack, who care not how things goes, so as they gets their victuals and drink, and sleep, and wages, and vails. But such a pair of candles, and such

wine, to be served up to the brave deliverers of our country ! Oh, 'twas monscus !”

“ Oh, for a brave deliverer now !” said Nettlethorp emphatically.

“ Madam,” said Sir Frederick, “ we shall be obliged for the genuine port you have promised ; and we shall also thank you to expedite its appearance, as we are anxious to drown all unfavourable impressions of your cellar in bumpers to the prosperity of the Imperial Crown ;” and with great condescension Sir Frederick opened the door of the tolerably decent apartment she had conducted them into, for the purpose of facilitating her departure.

In the wine and supper our subalterns found a most palatable improvement ; but even from this no favourable alteration in the spirits of poor Cameron, over whom melancholy seemed obtaining increased dominion against the evident struggles of his fortitude. So mournful, indeed, were his looks and thrilling tones, that Fauconberg, completely subdued by them,

ventured (whilst the others were arranging their table in a station of comfort after supper) to break through that interdict to curiosity which the reserve of Cameron had long since raised, to ask him—

“Could a poor half-pay d—l like himself prove of use or consolation to him?”

“O, yes,” responded Cameron, with a look and tone which penetrated to the heart of Albert, “the treasure of your mind can yield to misery every consolation. Let me lodge in the same house with you, wheresoever it may be. You will see that I am kindly treated, should the anguish of a breaking heart again subdue my senses. You will do this, Fauconberg; but never talk of your home before me, never name Alvina in my hearing.”

“You shall accompany me; and come what may, Cameron, you shall find me faithful,” said Fauconberg, as with a grasp of truth he pressed the hand of his unhappy friend, who, subdued almost to tears, fled from the room to conceal how much he was affected; and when at length he recovered sufficient firmness to

rejoin the party, his manner wore a sweet composure; a sort of sublimated fortitude that touched the sympathy of all, though Fauconberg only knew by what magic spell his aspect had been tranquillized.

“I wonder,” said Marchmont, the most loquacious of a party silenced by care and uncertainty, “if we shall ever meet again! Should we, it may be curious to hear us, like the robbers in *Gil Blas*, recounting our wonderful adventures.”

“Heaven forbid that we should not meet again,” said Fauconberg; “and, under happier auspices, have not only wonderful, but prosperous adventures to relate.”

“I hope, Marchmont, you mean to go to your mother direct,” said Nettlethorp, “and to make no long tarrying in the metropolis, my youngster; that is no place for one of your mettle.”

“No,” responded Marchmont, with the first shade of gloom that had appeared upon his brow since the reduction, “I will never go and sponge upon poor aunt Clara’s generosity.

I plundered her enough already. Why, man, they have been forced to decamp into Wales for economy, without my helping hand, who am no drone in extravagance."

"Then what do you mean to do with yourself, boy?" demanded Nettlethorp with kind anxiety.

"Do! why ruddle my phiz, and attend upon you as your merry-andrew, if you will be so obliging as to turn mountebank for my accommodation, Nettley, my infallible Mentor!"

"If you are serious, Marchmont, in your determination of not visiting your mother at present," said Fauconberg, "you had better attach yourself to Cameron and to me, till you have some certain ground to go upon. We shall visit London for a short period, my present speculation being authorship. Whilst in Spain, I made some sketches of the country, and of various battles, which, with the notes I have taken, may be worked up into some sort of military journal, that may present me with a day or two's subsistence."

"Why," said Marchmont, "I would have

at once acknowledged having something of the scribbling plan in my own pate, only I feared Nettley would hoot me for the goose that presented the pen. There has been such economizing in the public offices. Rat economy, say I! Such a tide of experienced clerks let flow in upon the mercantile ocean, that there will be no getting to drive a quill in any counting-house for love or money; so, in some of my financiering trances, I have been dreaming, Nettley, of your turning printer's devil, and scudding to and fro from the press to my attica with the atrocious murders and rhymeless ballads I manufacture for Grubstreet."

"Stick to the ballads, man," exclaimed Fauconberg, "and you may benefit by the united professions of poet and minstrel. Sing your own lays, and let your tuneful flageolet resound through the streets in melodious symphonies."

"A brilliant thought, by Apollo!" said Sir Frederick; "and my cheerless abode might be sometimes gladdened by strains heard by me

in happier days; only, after I visit some old friends, I mean to pitch my tent in the south of France, and there vegetate in all the mental misery of inaction."

"Why the d—l should you do that?" exclaimed Nettlethorp angrily. "Cannot you vegetate in England? Can you find no spot here for misery and idleness, and not take your cash thither? Small as the amount may be, it will help to enrich that enemy who has impoverished our country; and though our country has used me confoundedly ill ———"

"You will not allow any one to retaliate," said Sir Frederick, smiling.

"Not if I have power to prevent it; for though my country has used me infamously, ungratefully, unfeelingly, yet in any other country in the universe I should have been used worse. Ay, sir, under similar circumstances ten thousand times worse. I know I should. And though we cannot but confess we have an infernal pack of knaves and fools, defiling, and disfiguring, and polluting our community; nay, though out of every hundred of our souls

one might be posed to find fifty-five worth saving, yet, in any other country on the surface of the globe, the odds would run nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine against the good. And though I grieve to say, bad is the best country in the world; yet, as that one is my own, I love it; and though I have been used hardly, scurvily, through public clamour, and even worse by private individuals; although no heart in it ever warmed to me, yet my heart warms to the glow of fervent zeal for the welfare of my country; and the little modicum I have I will spend in it, sir, though I may waste into the skeleton semblance of a French dancing-master for my patriotism."

"Waste not, nor want not!" exclaimed Marchmont archly; "but turn dancing-master at once, man, piping-hot from Paris; Monsieur Pâs-grave, professor of quadrilles to grown ladies and gentlemen, and I am your man to tickle the ear with my kit. Come, my old buck, you know you taught long stiff Crook-shanks *une gigue*, *un rigodon*, the *saraband*, and the *bolle-ron*; and that he prided him-

self ever after upon being an accomplished caperer."

"No," returned Nettlethorp, "I'll have nothing to do with monkey frolics; therefore, you are not for my service, pug! No, sir."

'The time once was, ere England's griefs began,

'When ev'ry rood of ground maintain'd its man.'

GOLDSMITH.

Now, I have in the world about as much cash as will enable me to buy or rent a rood of ground; I have hands to build me a hut upon it, and ——"

"And Fauconberg, the most accomplished hut-architect in Europe," cried Marchmont, "can supply you with a design. You can recommend him, Cameron?"

"Yes," said Cameron, with unusual animation, "I can commend and recommend Fauconberg."

"Well," continued Nettlethorp, earnestly, "I purpose to maintain myself by the sweat of my brow in continuation of a life of toil."

I have ever been partial to farming, and I had a fellow prisoner in France, an able agriculturist, from whom I acquired some useful information. Now, why should not you, Sir Frederick, adopt something of my plan upon an extended scale? Give yourself employment, without which, as you anticipate, you will be miserable. Keep yourself and your money in your own country. Keep your heart purely English; no foreign acquirements can improve it. Stay at home, sir, and perform your duty by your country, though she has not done hers by you."

"I would most certainly prefer continuing in England, and for some of the very motives you have urged," returned Sir Frederick; "could my income here answer my necessary expenditure. I should have no objection to aid it by agriculture, but I know not if I have any turn for the pursuit."

"Do you know that you have not?"

"I never made the experiment."

"Then why the d—l draw a conclusion

without a proof. Try it, man. Procure an able instructor, and give agriculture one year's trial."

"If you will be that instructor, I really think I may be tempted into the undertaking."

"So then," exclaimed the volatile Marchmont, forgetting Fauconberg's kind offer to him, "you are filing off in pairs, and poor pillgarlic remains to ground his arms solus. But would not a *quintetto* have a more cheerful effect than these tame *duettos*? What say you to our advertising for a haunted mansion, in consideration of our dearth of the needful, to get it cheap; with a rood of ground to it for Nettlethorp, an acre for Sir Frederick, appropriate apartments for Fauconberg, Cameron, and Madame Clio, and a shed for my Pegásus. We can furnish it with our camp equipage, and each take a domestic department. Come, I'll be orderly to the household."

"Orderly, quotha!" responded Nettlethorp. "An orderly household it would prove that you had a share in regulating!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS night proved very tempestuous, and aided the heavy weight upon the mind of Fauconberg in banishing repose from his pillow; and his perplexities were not a little augmented by the situation of the friend to whom he had pledged his word never to abandon.

Cameron was so interesting a being, that in defiance of all the mystery by which he was encompassed, and which, through its very impenetrability, was likely to awaken suspicions to his disadvantage; he had so fastened upon the esteem of Fauconberg, that he could as soon have suspected the integrity of his own bosom as that of Cameron's. But the idea of mental derangement again subduing this evident victim of misfortune and excess of sensibility, filled his mind with anticipations of horror; whilst prudence suggested the embarrassment that must arise from the pecuniary

arrangements which it might be necessary to adopt, in the event of his poor friend being attacked by a fresh access of this calamity.

Prior to his compact with poor Cameron, Albert had determined against returning to his mother to decrease her scanty supplies; while, from his brother's influencing his uncle to procure his promotion to full pay, he cherished no hope; for since the hour he parted from Rosstrevor, immediately after the final victory which sheathed all swords, he had never received a line from him; and thus he had felt no restriction to the impulse which had led him to join his present fortunes with those of Cameron.

With so many subjects to engage his thoughts, it was no wonder that when Cameron knocked for admission at his chamber door at early dawn, he found poor Albert still performing the vigil of a sleepless night.

"I am come," said Cameron, the moment he had closed the door, "I am come to enter into the only extent of confidential communication the mystery of my bitter griefs can

permit my ever holding with the only individual in existence in whom I would repose even my limited confidence. You, Fauconberg, have promised me the faith of friendship, let what may betide me; but I solemnly swear to you that the dire malady you have seen me subdued by is not hereditary. There is a chord, a dire, a deadly chord, which, when sounded in my heart, vibrates through my brain, and loses for a time its discordant tone in the delirium of strong fever. Thrice it has overwhelmed me; and if again ———”

Cameron's emotion now became pitiable, as he grasped the hand of Fauconberg with his own cold trembling one, whilst he continued —

“ And, Fauconberg, who can tell, if such attacks should be repeated, how the brain may weather them? Death, or confinement of an expensive nature, may be the consequence; and in either case, the expense must not fall on you, nor loss on those whom you may employ for me. Take, therefore, this sealed packet, in trust for such sad contingencies.

It is, as you perceive, without superscription ; but should the time arrive for such a dire necessity, remove the envelope, and the enclosure will lead you to those who will duly honour your demands ; to those to whom, in health, I shall never apply ; but I have claims on them which they cannot, they dare not resist.

“ For the happier prospect, Fauconberg, of living illumined by the light of reason, and under your kind auspices, I have merely my half-pay in certainty ; but I look to literary exertion to aid me. Ere I joined our army, I found employment from the editor of a very popular periodical work, who kindly desired me, should I ever wish to exchange the sword for the pen, ‘ to return to him, and endeavour to gather laurels in a different field.’ To him I mean, therefore, to apply ; and will, if you give me leave, present you to him.

“ You have now in your hand, Fauconberg, but a sheet of paper between you and the mystery that envelopes me in the shell of impenetrable reserve ; that which has blotted

happiness from my heart's tablet for ever, and consigned me to the dire visitations of mental subjugation. Your honour is its invulnerable shield, and the deposit is made in firm reliance upon that honour."

Cameron now fled from the room, too noble in mind to exact or expect the promises of Albert to be faithful, leaving his sympathizing friend subdued to tears, by the agitation with which Cameron had reverted to his possible calamity and made his important deposit; a deposit which filled the mind of Fauconberg with alarm, lest, in the insecurity of the shabby abodes he must be doomed to, it might be lost, till the expediency recurred to his memory of placing it as an important trust in the hands of the agents to his regiment.

When our party assembled for breakfast, they found Mrs. Adolphus busily arranging their table; for having heard from Dermot, upon further questions, "That his master's father had been Lord Bishop of ———," she thought, as a lord's son, he demanded a vast portion of respectful attention; and to evince

the profundity of this respect, she was scolding Sam Waiter most audibly, and loading the table with rancid ham and dried fish.

“ Well, as sure as my name is Dolphus,” she exclaimed, the moment Fauconberg appeared, “ here comes his reverence, who will be shocked at your ignorance, you vulgar oaf! not to slice my capital Westwhale ham genteeler and slimmerer. He never seed such notches in my lord his father’s palace; and my lady his mother would faint away at such gobbitty hunches, fit enough for the craving jaws of shay-boys and such cattle. But I say, Sam, run to Molly Barmaid, and tell her to mind her hits, and send up the real ratafee; and tell Susan Cook not to smudge the toast; and call Tom Hostler to see if the hens have laid their best eggs in the stable, and boil them to a bubble, for his young reverence’s breakfast. Why don’t you run, you loitering rusty nag, you? My name’s not Dolphus if ever I was so nonplushed with shallow pates, if you’ll believe me, gemmen, since I becomed mistress of the Imperial Crown.”

“ And pray, Mrs. Doll-fuss, how did you get on before you wore the Imperial Crown?” demanded Marchmont gravely.

“ O, bless you, sir, a mortal deal better. We did not keep so many hands; for so much was not looked for under the Rose; and the *mitchdemanners* of these thick-sculls passed unawares or unbeknown to many.”

“ It must have been so much pleasanter to have such *mitchdemanners* pass under the Rose unbeknown to your guests,” returned Marchmont; “ that I think it almost unfortunate you were not contented, without the innovations which so perplex you, Mrs. Doll-fuss.”

“ Inn of Nations, sir! I did not change from the old-fashioned Rose and Crown to the Inn of Nations, sir; but, in honour of our victorious war, to the Imperial Crown.”

“ Then why the d--l, woman, if you meant to show a sign of your honouring the war,” exclaimed Nettlethorp, “ did you not pay honour where honour was due, and hoist up St. George and the Dragon, or the Wellington Arms?”

“ O, sir,” responded Mrs. Adolphus, bridling — “ George and the Dragon is gone by in England, as well as the Rose and Crown; and, as to Lord Wellington, he never was the one to pass this here way; and if he had, I does not know if he would have given me a second look.”

“ But I do,” returned Nettlethorp, drily.

“ Ah! you must know better than I; but had Wellington thought proper to come this way, and look as graciously on me as the Emperor, when I made my own polite obeisance, and hallowed to all our folks to shout and cheer, I might have hanged up the Duke through gratitude, instead of Alexander; for my name’s not Dolphus, gemmen, but my gratitude glowed like a nag after a hilly stage. And well it might; for I had been used to nothing but the ungenteelest of behaviours from the milantary; for only having a few mertallos to guard, we seldom had none of the bettermost sort stationed hereabout, to frequent this house: nothing but your rubbishy pranketty boys, far fitterer to be

at boarding school than at their dyepot [depôt] above. And indeed, sir," curtsying to Marchmont — "I took you for one of my torments, when you comed in yesterday. Rabbit, it! what a displorable colour this here table-cloth is! — my beautiful damask turned into the d — l's nutting bag! So, gemmen, these youngsters would come down from the barrack on their hacks, and in their gigs, and their tantrums [tandems], to kick up rows here; calling us all out of our honest names. Even my sign displeased them; and that, forsooth, they dismonstrated "the Boar's Head," just as if we were nasty folks, and lived like hogs; and our place was 'Eastcheap,' instead of Eastgate, wanting by that there to sinuate, as how we were extorterously dear. Then it well became them to call my husband 'Fallstaff,' which was very ungenteel of them to twit him with an accidence; but how they comed to know he let a staff fall on a revenue officer's head, as he was boarding a boat as my husband and two others were amusing themselves in, I know not; for the

man was so stunned that he dropped to the bottom of the deep, and so he could not be the tattler; and moreover than that, they never clapt eyes on him, but they hollowed out for a sack, or a cup of sack, which was a very unjust accusation; for though he might have been seen, and was, coming up from the creek with a sack on his back, he need not be twitted with it, nor have a cup of what the sack retained called for, as no one could say as 'twas smugged spirits, he having a permit in his possession. Then Peter Hostler, the best as ever we had, they christened Ancient Pistol, 'cause he once let off a pistol on the highway, too near a traveller, who let fall his purse for fright; and which poor Peter thought no harm to pick up, when t'other ran away from it; and this name so stomached Peter, lestways, through their jeers, he might get into trouble, that he took himself off. Then, not content at giving my house an ill name, but they would not let me alone; and I, forsooth, was at one time Mother Quickly. Had they left out mother, for I am not in years to be

consulted by a hag's name, it would not have been so much amiss, as I am quick. Dang it! how dark that sugar looks in that snow-white basin! ay, I must get a black one, and then my sugar will be like the snow. But, as I was a saying, gemmen, then they must needs flustrate me, by reflecting on my station; and so, because when I had sitting time, I sat in my bar to watch my liquors, and prevent their idling Molly Barmaid; if they did not call me Bar Dolph, instead of Mrs. Dolphus. But now your breakfasts is ready; I trust it will be to your liking. The tea is none of your smuggled competitions, but clean from Twineys. The bread pure, though some'at of the stalest; but the next baking 'twill be new for your reverence. The cream from my own dairy, rather thin from the long drought in the summer. Your butter excellent; made of my own milk, and with my own print, the Imperial Crown. But sure as my name is Dolphus, I shall not be able to catch the turbot I medicated for your dinner; the soy makes such a raging; but luckily I

have provisions for a month at least, should your reverence be so long weather bounded, by the two bridges, as hem in our place, being carried away last night."

Mrs. Adolphus, after giving this alarm to her guests of a possible detention in her comfortless habitation, was luckily summoned to the bar, as it allowed the exercise of their own oral faculties, and of entering into some confidential communications. At length, Sir Frederick addressed Nettlethorp:

"The raging elements allowed me as little repose as they afforded themselves through the night. I therefore had time for serious meditation upon all you advised; and you find me this morning as good a patriot as yourself, Nettlethorp."

"Then that is a d——l of a doubtful one; for the night, in contrariety of effect, rocked me almost into a traitor. For how could I pardon a country which rewarded my bondage and my services with such a birth? where there was nothing of that national word

comfort, which those clamorous patriots love so well ; nor of the continental one, which those patriotic spirits understand not, content, which outweighs our vaunted expression in sterling value ; for the deuce a bit content was I with a bed as hard as this bread ; and all the hours I lay taking my full part with the elements in the concert of murmuring, I, like the bantering youngsters of the *dye-pot*, thought of the fiery Bardolph, when I felt a remembrancer of my dinner, in full conviction of our landlady having poked her nose into the cookery, as her only chance of causing a burning in my heart."

" Assuredly," said Sir Frederick, " she may, as Bardolph performed link to jovial Jack, save her husband a fortune in lights. In his smuggling trade, her countenance must prove of *signal* service."

" A light woman, by Jupiter !" cried Marchmont — " Who would have suspected that ? But zounds ! as she stood there, holding forth in her court mourning, such a portly black

mass, I thought of Etna in a fierce eruption ; and considered her tongue as the burning lava, pouring down upon us, as the poor devoted vineyards and villages around."

By this time, Nettlethorp, having smiled himself into better humour with his country, demanded — " In what respect the vigil of his night had improved Sir Frederick's patriotism ?"

" It has led me," returned the baronet, " to the determination of not forsaking my country ; at least without giving it a fair trial, for finding me honest employment, to aid my income sufficiently to ease me of the imputation of miser, in my struggle for some sort of appearances. For one year, Nettlethorp, I mean to try your plan ; and if I find I have a talent for agriculture, I will proceed. I have retained a small farm in my own hands, to which I appointed a substitute to act for me ; but of whom I cherish suspicions of his calculating more upon his own profits than my losses : therefore, what say you, Nettlethorp,

shall we superintend his management, and let your rood and my acre be obtained on easy terms from the same landlord, Farmer Bolingbroke?"

Nettlethorp shook Sir Frederick most cordially by the hand, and expressed his acquiescence in the kind proposition, in terms of strong and grateful feeling.

"And I think," continued Sir Frederick, smiling, "I might contrive to supply Marchmont with the shed he humbly covets, if he seriously intends to bestride his Pegasus with a pair of panniers, to hold the wares he means to manufacture."

"O, shelter me, my liege, beneath the shed of your protection, for one year!" exclaimed Marchmont, joyfully; "and by balladmongery, murders, and robberies, I'll engage to fill my bread panniers."

"Agreed then," said Sir Frederick, taking his hand kindly; "but mind your murders and robberies draw no suspicion upon the honest folks you herd with."

“ No, no,” cried the happy Marchmont, “ you are above suspicion of being an accomplice in my performances.”

“ But my night’s vigil,” resumed Sir Frederick, “ presented me with a wider field of accommodation, in a dwelling corresponding exactly with Marchmont’s suggestions upon the subject last night. A mansion of mine, upon the very estate where Nettlethorp and I are to commence our career as ploughmen, is so haunted by evil spirits, or evil report, that even my farmer would not continue his residence there after a short trial, and removed to the farm-house belonging to this small domain. From these evil reports, and being from other causes much out of repair, of course its value has been lowered into quite as cheap a residence as economy could advertise for. If then, upon deliberation, we seriously think we could arrange it, by aiding its defective furniture with our camp stores into a residence for us all, upon the plan of a commonwealth ; it is at our united service, rent free. And we choice spirits, who

sniffed powder on the plain of Waterloo, can fear no legions from any realm who may attack our castle ; for, in fact, it pretends to so dignified an appellation. The air is pure and mild ; the manor well stocked with game, which we shall all be qualified to send in to the general mess ; our fish-pond will be old ocean, as our goodly castle of Menroy stands on the coast of ——— ; and, in a word, the only objection I can anticipate to our thus realizing Marchmont's project, arises from possible inconvenience to our scribes, through distance from the metropolitan mart for their productions."

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT wild plan which had originated in a mere jest of Marchmont's, at length assumed a serious aspect. The proposition of Sir Frederick Bolingbroke was discussed over and over again, until all which had at first appeared to impede its equal advantages to each individual, was smoothed away by the influence of mutual wishes; and even Cameron, for the comfort of Fauconberg, acquiesced in the expediency of accepting the Baronet's kind offer; reminding his considerate friend, that in so large a dwelling as a castle, there could be no doubt of his finding some detached spot sacred to himself; whither he might retire upon the plea of his literary employment, when at any time society became oppressive to his feelings.

At length, it was determined upon giving this commonwealth at Menroy Castle that

year of trial which Sir Frederick and Nettlethorp had agreed to bestow upon agricultural experiment; and preparatory to the final emigration of this colony of friends to their new settlement, it was arranged that the copartners in husbandry should visit the haunted castle, for the purpose of examining its capabilities, and its accommodation for their new establishment.

The repairs of the bridges at length emancipated our murmuring prisoners from the imperial territories; the agriculturists set out for Menroy Castle; and the three Grub Street candidates, as Nettlethorp dubbed them, set out for London, to negotiate for forwarding their productions to their different publishers. On the very morning after Marchmont's arrival in the metropolis, he found his way to the very street which Nettlethorp, in his unrefined raillery, had recommended him to acquire attic wit in, by establishing himself in a garret there.

The first shop which appeared auspicious to his purpose, was rapidly entered by March-

mont, who, perceiving a respectable looking man behind the counter, immediately addressed him, in the tones of his usual careless good humour.

“ Sir, through presentiment, I pronounce you the sapient personage I seek. I am in immediate want of a judge, to try the criminal before you ; who pleads guilty to having committed a barbarous, cruel, and inhuman murder —— to paper ! There, my Lord Judge, is the indictment : sum up evidence, and without delay, for I do not patronize delay — pronounce sentence !”

The publisher stared ; then, smiling, took the offered sheet of paper, requesting the prisoner at the bar to accept the indulgence of a seat whilst he looked over the indictment. The writing was easily deciphered, and the perpetration mercifully rapid ; the perusal, therefore, did not occupy many minutes ; during which the publisher shuddered — then smiled — then laughed outright ; and then drawing from his pocket a one pound note

and a shilling, presented them to Marchmont, saying :

“ Thus, sir, I pronounce judgment ; and if the sentence meets your approbation, the hue and cry of your barbarous deeds shall follow close upon the heels of the retreating perpetrator.”

Marchmont, having heard of five guineas for a novel of as many volumes, considered one guinea for something less than matter for half a chapter, noble remuneration ; and wild with joy, he accepted the offering ; and in still higher ecstasy, heard the purchaser of his first essay in authorship declare, “ that, if the young sanguinary would daily commit such barbarous deeds — to paper, he would gladly seek his own reward, by betraying them to the public.”

On the light wings of hope confirmed, Marchmont flew to rejoin his friends, to announce, “ that whilst they grovelled on half-pay, he had soared to fuller pay than he had ever enjoyed.”

Cameron and Fauconberg cordially congratulated this happy author upon the prompt consummation of his hopes ; whilst of such rapid works they were not doomed to be the performers ; nor were their more important and toilsome labours to be comparatively so highly recompensed. Yet they were satisfied. They had had an interview with the gentleman of whom Cameron had made such honourable mention ; and had agreed upon such arrangements relative to their meditated productions, as were most suitable to their perfect convenience.

As evening advanced, Marchmont, who had been for some time secretly uneasy, began to evince outward and visible symptoms of inquietude. His Grub Street ally had promised the hue and cry of his atrocity should wait upon his heels ; yet no discordant voice had struck upon his expecting ears the gratifying yell of " murder." He had commenced the perpetration of another deed of horror ; but the ghost of the former mangled victim haunted him so mercilessly, that he was

compelled to relinquish the measure ; for his employment at length became irresistible, that of consulting his watch at least every five minutes, to learn if he must give up all expectation of the dulcet dole that night ; and at last, not longer able to retain command over his articulation, he exclaimed : —

“ I wonder this hue and cry has not made its way into the Borough, of all places ! ”

“ Why, no doubt, man, the whole impression was bought up, ere they could reach Southwark,” said Fauconberg, much amused at the first feelings of a new-fledged author.

“ Ha ! may be so ! — I never thought of that,” replied Marchmont, with a bright blush of animated joy. “ But, then you know, sir, they would in that case have popped off another edition out of hand ; for the types of such things must remain set, whilst — but, hark ! — was not that a yell ? Zounds, yes ! Listen ! Sir, listen ! Yes, faith, is it a murder ? — I hope it is mine.”

And now, flying to the window, he threw up

the sash to listen ; and by doing which, admitted such a current of winter's wind, that it extinguished one candle, and would have performed the same airy exploit on the other, only for the intervening hand of Cameron.

“ I beg your pardon,” Marchmont exclaimed, closing the sash ; “ but ascertain the fact I must :” when, snatching up his hat, he rushed from the room, followed by the attentive Fauconberg, who felt alarmed at this unthinking spirit intermingling with any throng in the streets. But though Albert was much taller than his friend, and agile as man could be, he was distanced by the impatient energies of the author ; whom he therefore could not overtake, until Marchmont had penetrated through all the mazes of his way to the sonorous herald of atrocity, who was attracting purchasers in every direction, and made his purchase also.

Marchmont now blessed those who had brought gas into general use ; for by its reflected rays through a shop window, he, to his great joy, ascertained the murder to be his

own. Hope, now realized, tempered his movements to a more sober bearing; and assimilating his footsteps to those of Fauconberg, they together returned to Cameron, who instantly exclaimed: —

“Most luckless wight! your pocket has been sacked.”

This information was but too true; his fob had been completely sacked. Fortunately, he had left his watch upon the table, when his impatient anxiety had last drawn it forth; and his more serious stock of cash he had given to the care of Fauconberg; but the few shillings he had retained for immediate expenses, and the money he had received in Grub Street, were gone for ever.

“Well,” he cried, “there is no help for it. Robbery and murder generally combine; but, if all poor scribblers fare like my worship, no wonder they are such celebrated patrons of starvation. But, Messrs. Co—, this loss must whet the edge of my invention: so, come, dame necessity, and out of hand perform your maternal character.”

The subsequent morning Marchmont appeared in Grub Street as the avowed perpetrator of another justifiable homicide, and was received most graciously by his accomplice, who rewarded his diligence by a rise of one guinea upon his bloody work; and with his thoughts as alert sentinels over his two pounds two, he safely brought it to the care of Fauconberg.

During the remainder of this lucky day Marchmont revelled in the golden dream of earning from six to twelve guineas per week, by the dedication of an hour each day to sanguinary practices; and so delightful he found the dream, that he allowed no intervening cloud to glide in between it and the sun of perpetual prosperity. No caprice in public taste, no variation in his own power of supplying materials to work upon, no ill health, no afflictions, were ever to impede his industry or success; and his aunt Clara should have this comfort; his beloved mother that; and his sister a harp, a grand piano, and a beautiful select library.

These ideal arrangements beguiled his time, until it became too late for dedicating his pen that night to his lucrative occupation ; and by thus lingering in the fascinating castles of his aerial architecture, he diminished his heap of expected treasure at least two guineas. However, to compensate for this idle freak, he arose with the sun next morning, and completed his inhuman composition ere he breakfasted ; yet could not convey it that morning to his publisher, being under the necessity of attending an appointment with his army agent ; and from whose office he accompanied Cameron and Fauconberg to view the panorama of Waterloo, then to visit their late colonel, and then to a paper manufactory to purchase largely for their new pursuit ; so that not until the following day could he bend his anxious steps to Grub Street ; whither he went, resolving, as he was to leave London the succeeding morning, to arrange with his friend and publisher, that he might send up his ghosts and murderers by the gross, either by coach or waggon, as his confederate should advise.

Arrived in Grub Street, the blank looks of his ally gave him no presentiment of alarm ; for he at once construed this change of aspect as sullenness, for his having failed in his compact of a daily supply of atrocity ; and instantly he exclaimed : —

“ Cheer up, my sanguinary accomplice, for here have I brought you honourable amends ; not only by the most appalling murder ever perpetrated ; but, in the most imposing ghost that ever appeared in black and white, and which will work wonders for us. Sir, not a girl in the metropolis, who gets sight of our ghost, will sleep with a visible head for a month after. Here it is for you ; the most pillow-depopulating heroine you ever sent forth to dismay.”

“ Ah ! sir,” returned the publisher, “ I am sorry to become the publisher of bad news for you. You must, for the present at least, take back your ghost, and have it laid — in a place of safety ; for I cannot now venture upon any more of your capital offences ; since the example set by us spread like contagion, inducing others to more heinous crimes ; even

that of murdering murder. Our first day's success was so unparalleled, it set Grub Street in an uproar yesterday morning. Why, zounds ! sir, even I shrunk from the yell of murder ! as the original, and its vociferously conducted echoes, set out with the war-whoop, which sent our before successful troop soon back discomfited ; for the buyers, not possessing the instinct of knowing where to buy, shortly the counter cry of ' a catch-penny ! ' silenced all our voices ; and here lie the remains of two score of your last mangled bodies, to haunt me for my encouragement of such enormities."

The dismayed Marchmont, who had allowed the "soaring pinions of an author's vanity to bear him high in the altitude of certainty, now with a heavy heart and fallen crest made his lingering way back to his friends, to tell them "that his hopes were blighted, and that he must give up the happiness of accompanying them to the haunted castle of Sir Frederick Bolingbroke."

"Nay, Marchmont, you cannot in honour

rescind," said Cameron, kindly; "*Gardez la foi*; for we have pledged ourselves to embark together, abide by each other's failures, and tread our social path in unison for the period specified, whether we find it a path of thorns or flowers."

But Marchmont could eat no dinner, so bitterly did he feel his disappointment; and so apprehensive was he, that to accompany his friends to Menroy Castle would be reprehensible in him, when he knew not how he could manage for adequate subsistence; and as soon as Dermot and the house-waiter had departed after dinner, in reply to something Marchmont said, in the tone of despondence, Fauconberg kindly addressed him: —

"Despair not, man; for besides the utter impossibility of breaking compact with your sworn allies, you know not but that which you thus deplore may have been ordained for your ultimate advantage. Your humility arranged for you a very humble path in authorship; and fate may impel you to elevation, through the intervention of necessity.

Instead of a fabricator of wonders for the mop and broom literati, soar to the composition of tales of horror for romances; and depopulate the pillows of ladies fair, by spring locks, hollow groans, and appalling caverns."

Marchmont shook his head, despondingly.

"You talked of ballads," said Cameron: "by this, I conclude, you have some turn for poetry."

"Poetry!" exclaimed Marchmont, led by his strong sense of the ridiculous from the pangs of disappointed hope, almost to a laugh, at the idea of his poetic vein: "Yes, I have emulated the parish bellman, and strung rhymes for Grub Street; but, there my market fails."

"Well, well; but do try your powers at a novel or romance," said Fauconberg; "and you, who could string the marvellous for a whole day's march to beguile no common toils, with the success that you have done, can scarcely fail of fabricating a tale from fancy's stores that must find purchasers."

"Ah! Fauconberg, my tales of a cock and

a bull, and a roasted soldier, did wonderfully well to beguile the weary way through chains of bleak sierras, and depopulated provinces; where even the bleating of a sheep, or the cawing of a crow, was hailed as an event deserving three times three."

"But seize the crow's quill," said Fauconberg, "and transform it into the style of genius, to grave on fame's tablet something worth recording."

"Remember," replied Marchmont, "the eagle has forsaken his own track, and descended from the lofty soar of epic poetry to pipe in the hedge-row, where all the finches—save the *gold* finches of the grovelling race of scribes, used to chirp their humble lays, that drew for them the boon of bread from many a patronising damsel's hand.

"But, to speak soberly about it, novel-writing is, you know, my good fellow, no longer the work of artists who could aim at no higher structure: read in secret, by all derided, and the perusal often disclaimed. Now, the stores of science, the genius of poetry, the

treasures of ancient and modern literature, combine in the embellishment of novels. The whole world, from the learned heads of universities to the ragged pupil of our national schools, consume their leisure hours in reading the works of one prolific novelist: he who supersedes the pursuits of old black letter literature; he, on whom the drama hangs for his supporting hand; he, from whose heroines our fair ones form their manners; he, whose muse supplies the patriot with strains for melodies to whet their courage and their sword. And who can dare to enter lists, even to seek for food, where such a mighty warrior rides triumphant; nay, now rides, like Phoebus in his daily race, alone?"

"But the sun cannot always shine," returned Fauconberg, smothering a smile at the altitude poor Marchmont's prose had soared to. "He must have moments in which he seeks repose, and then the little twinkling stars may be observed; or, to use less exalted similes, when like the *figurante* in a grand *ballet*, you may earn bread by sufferance, whilst the

great artist seeks a moment's respite to recover breath, ere his feats again astonish and delight."

"Well, then," said Marchmont, "I will try my fortune as a subordinate; but yet, I tremble at the undertaking. I have no science, no academic lore, to reflect its brilliancy from my lamp of fancy."

"Any that I possess, you may command," said both his companions, in one breath.

"No, no," returned Marchmont, "I will shine with no borrowed light. Whatever my own untutored brain can dish up for the public ordinary, shall go, neat as imported. Good, bad, or indifferent, it shall be all my own. By this, I do not mean that I will not listen to advice, nor pay homage to the rod of kind correction, that inflicts with a friendly hand. But the lash, in which I can descry the venom of invidiousness, will find me the unbending oak; for I would prefer perseverance in error or absurdity, to being amended by the crab-juice of ——. What ails you, Fauconberg? I believe you are becoming an in-

sufferable coxcomb, for you are ever on the broad grin, to display those beautiful grinders that dazzle the fair."

"My dear sir, I now grin for joy, at the good omen you present. I hail you as a confirmed, inveterate scribe; for you evince the tenaciousness of a thorough-going one, as if through instinct. No, we will not put in a word, lest that word might lead us to put in our claim for one little leaf of the abundant laurels you anticipate."

"Pshaw! I do not wish to hang out false colours; nor even, as Sir Fretful says, in the Critic, 'steal from others, and serve their best thoughts, as gipsies do stolen children; disfigure them, to pass them for my own.' But surely I am not too old to go to the university, and then I should have no fears: but, that d—lish cash! That bane of man's repose! Zounds! why do not some of those ingenious patentees, whose inventions, by lessening the demand for hands to work, have cut off many resources for my earning bread; why do not they strike out machinery for a college, where

poor d—ls like myself could be clothed and fed by steam?"

"And taught too, Marchmont," exclaimed Fauconberg; "for were steam only to be employed in satisfying the cravings of nature at the festive board, the deuce a big-wig would stand forward as candidates for a professorship."

Any further disquisition upon the speculations of poor Marchmont was now superseded by the necessity of arranging their pecuniary matters in the inn, preparatory to their seeking the short repose the early starting of the coach the following morning allowed them; for on the morrow they were to accomplish their migration to the haunted castle of Menroy.

CHAPTER XX.

THE morning in which the hopes of Marchmont had met their unexpected blight in Grub Street, Fauconberg received a letter from Sir Frederick Bolingbroke, importing, "that he had found the castle of Menroy not one likely to prove that of comfort, being miserably out of repair; but that, Nettlethorp having pronounced a sufficient portion of the dwelling habitable, and the soil most promising for agriculture, he with pleasure offered them a welcome retreat there until their prospects brightened. That he was sorry to add, business would arbitrarily call him away from superintending the establishment of some necessary comforts for them; but, as it was impossible to leave poor Nettlethorp alone, to combat with the goblins of the castle, he hoped the troop of scribes would kindly set

out to relieve him, as soon as business would permit the measure with convenience."

The gratitude of our three friends at the George Inn immediately pronounced this request as one that demanded their prompt compliance. They, therefore, set about expediting every business to facilitate their departure for the haunts of evil spirits; and amongst the most important of Fauconberg's preparatory arrangements was the distressing necessity of informing Dermod O'Chanter of his situation; and to induce this faithful and attached creature, now he had performed his vow of bringing him safe back from the Continent, to return to the comforts of his own home, and the happiness of family society.

"But I have not performed my vow, master Albert dear," said Dermod, when his master made his confidential communications, "for that would be a mighty humbugging way of bringing you safe home, to be leaving you on the road. And besides, now your honour is going to be garrisoned in an ould moated tower, wid as many evil spirits as spiders in it, is not the time to be

pronouncing you out of danger ; so sorrow leave will I leave you ; for the only leave myself will take is that of sticking by you, master Albert, as long as ever you remain in a strange land, and in the blank books of that blinking buzzard fortune. But as to your not having where wid all to maintain a sarvant boy, that is nothing at all at all ; for sure I gave your honour a hint about Murtock Donovan, who was a ninth cousin of my mother's grandmother in a straight line from her great grandfather's maternal uncle, who married four wives, not all at onct indeed, but upon the heels of one another, and by the whole tote he had childer ; and his third wife's eldest son, who marrying the great niece of my mother's grand-aunt, who married Thady Donavan's grand-nephew ———"

" Well, well, Dermod, I see Murtock Donovan's straight lineage quite plainly," said Fauconberg ; " and so he was the ninth cousin of your father's grandmother ?"

" *Och*, no, your honour, no ; sorrow morsel of kith or kin was he to my father, and good

luck to him, but to my mother's grandmother ; and the way of it was ———."

"That I made a glaring mistake," said Albert, interrupting him. "Yes, the ninth cousin of your mother's ancestor. Sure I remember him and his genealogy quite well. But what of him, Dermod?"

"But there were two Murtock Donovans, your honour, the same relation to us, as they were co-latterall ; but one was more latteral, being by a good twinty years younger than the other ; which does your honour mean ? bekease I'll be after telling you how the one you don't recollect stud in regard to the relationship, for there is a great differ in the way of it."

"Why, a—the one I remember was your mother's ninth cousin."

"But did he squint, your honour ? The Murtock Donovan I mane squinted worse nor ———"

"Ramirez," said Albert. "Well, what of him, Dermod ?"

"*Och*, your honour, not worse nor Ramirez ; there was no rogue's leer about him ; his was

an honest straight-forward squint as ever you seen; for though he could not look you straight in the face, you could look direct into his heart, and a clean tinamint it was; and faith myself may spake well of it; and I know you will be agreeable to hear it, master Albert. He died one day, whilst we were abroad, Heaven rest his sowl! and left me his sole heir; and so myself, hearing it rumoured that it was likely our gallant battalion would be sint to the right about; and as your honour said, wid the tears in your eyes, the day we embarked from Dublin's sweet city, 'you would never return to be a burden on your dear and honoured mother;' so myself, widout being much of a conjurer, foreseeing all that has happened, wrote home to my darlingt ould father to send me every morsel of the legacy, the neat cabin, and the pratee garden, and the turf stack, and the three pigs, and the horse, and the car to boot; and so, whin we came to London, I found all in a letter waiting for me at the agent's; and so there it is, master Albert dear, the whole of the legacy, in a draft upon one

Messrs. Puget and Bainbridge, physicians to the college in Warwick-lane; and I will be entirely obliged to you if you will take it, master darlint, to enable you to continue an attached and faithful sarvant boy in your service."

"Never, Dermod, my dear and faithfully attached Dermod, never will I touch your store!" exclaimed Fauconberg, pressing the hand of Dermod with the warmth of glowing gratitude and sensibility, as tears gushed from his eyes, called forth by this affectionate creature's disinterested attachment; and by the painful chord it struck through his fraternal feelings in powerful contrast to his own brother.

"Oh, master Albert dear, but forgive my bouldness. Sure, dear, it is your own throughould compact, whin boys together; and myself, cock me up, had the honour to be allowed to play wid you, bekease his reverence was so kind to say, 'I was a—a—a—not a bad boy.' We always shared every thing, you know, master dear: the marvels [marbles], and the

tops, and the balls, and the cakes, and the apples, and the falls, and the pranks, and the wet, and the heat, and the coulds; but the dangers you took to yourself, whilst I had——”

“But—but, my good and kind friend,” said Fauconberg, endeavouring to recover firmness by aiming at a sportive response, “that would be the Irish mode of division, were I to take the whole of your legacy.”

“No, your honour, no; or if it be found the Irish division, it will be found a true one; for if the cash be all yours, the pleasure will be all mine; and indeed that would be the biggest half.”

It was several minutes ere Fauconberg could recover his firmness sufficiently to speak his steady negative with full effect to the affectionate importunities of poor Dermod; on whom this negative poured all the genuine sorrow of bitter disappointment, under which he could not rest contented, until his master promised, that should necessity require it hereafter, he would borrow his store from him.

“In the intermediate time,” said the grate-

ful and considerate Fauconberg, "it must rest in the public funds for you, where the interest ———"

"Will serve me for wages, any how, till your honour gets the length of fortune's fut, to allow me some."

"We will talk upon that subject some future day," returned his grateful master; "and since you will not return to the comforts of your own home, you shall share the discomforts of mine; and in full hope of their improving, I promise that we never part, until your wishes break the compact, Dermod."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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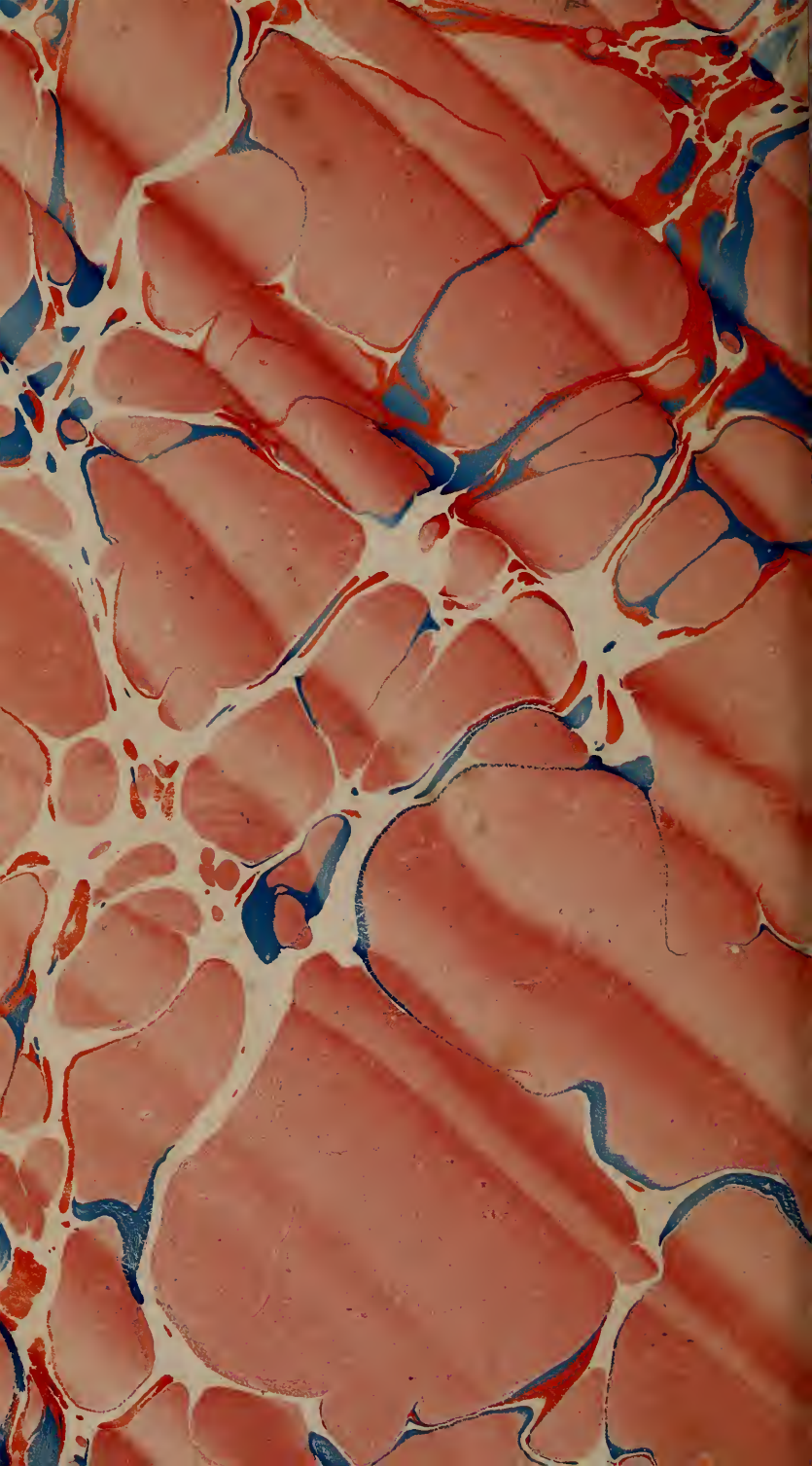


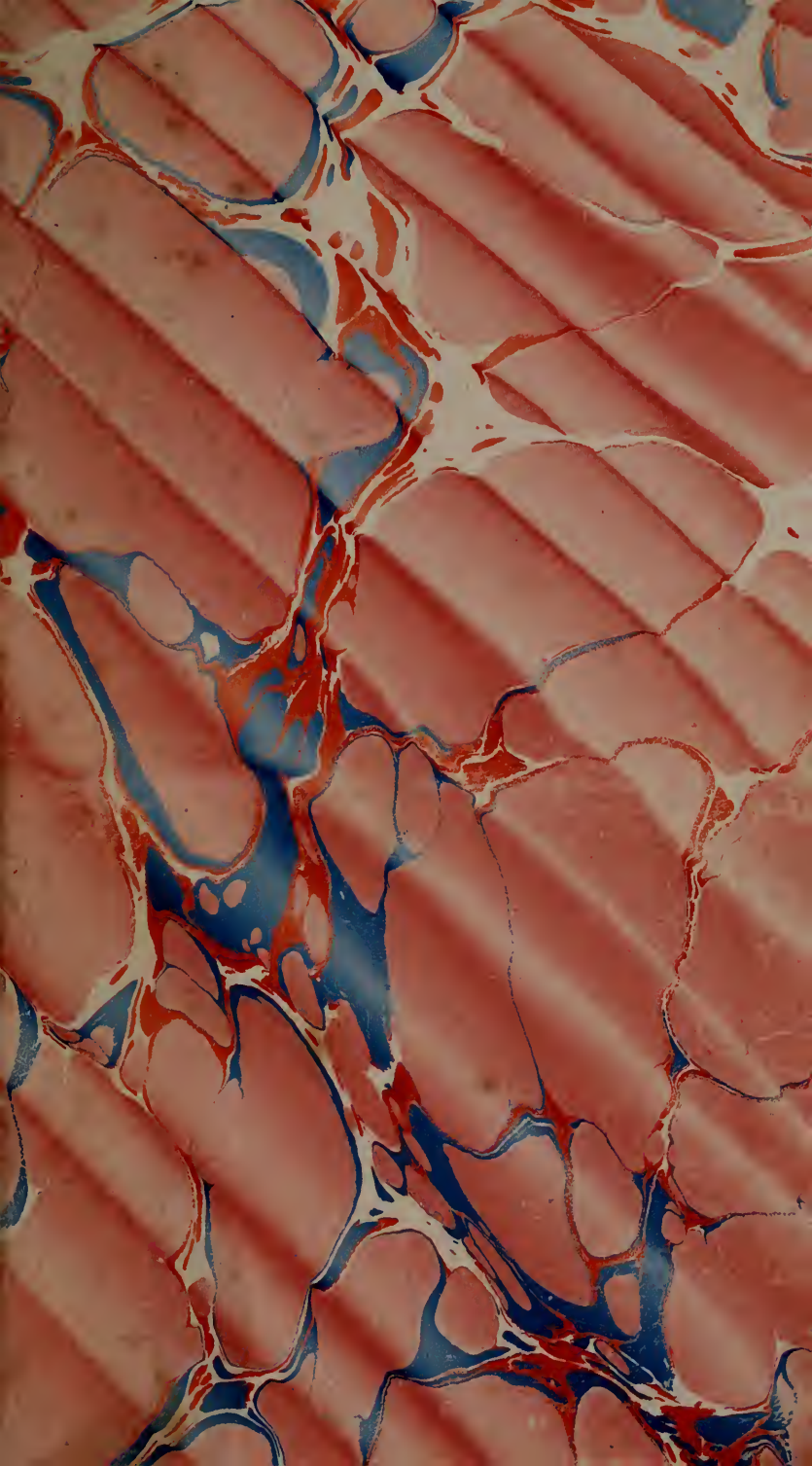












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